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FROISSART

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Sir Espan de Leu shows Froissart the place where a breach had been made in the wall of the town of Cazères.

[*front.*

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FROISSART

CHRONICLER AND POET

By

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PREFACE

ALTHOUGH the name of John Froissart is probably as familiar in this country as that of any foreign writer, medieval or modern, no attempt has yet been made to give the general reader a survey of the chronicler's life and activities, with an account of his writings in prose and in verse.[1] This circumstance in itself will justify the object of the present volume. A monograph of this nature seems all the more necessary as the discoveries made during the last century by continental scholars, which greatly affect our estimate of Froissart's achievement and add considerably to our knowledge of his methods as a writer, are still often overlooked. Owing to the incompleteness of our translations of the Chronicles, for instance, it is not generally recognised that Froissart wrote three distinct versions of his First, and most interesting Book, a close comparison of which is obviously essential in any critical survey of his works. It is seldom, moreover, that sufficient credit is given to an earlier writer, Jehan le Bel, whose Chronicles (which have so far not been translated in this country) were to a great extent incorporated word for word in the Chronicles of Froissart.

This work was originally planned for the " Republic of Letters " series, but with the consent of the Editor and Publishers it has now been decided to issue it in its present form in order to give the reader an opportunity to appreciate the artistic merits of the original

manuscripts of the Chronicles. The miniatures reproduced (with two exceptions) are from the famous Breslau manuscript, which was completed in 1469 for Antoine de Bourgogne, the natural son of Philip the Good.[1] The artistic value of these remarkable specimens of Burgundian art surpasses, in our opinion, that of any of the miniatures contained in other manuscripts of the Chronicles, many of which, moreover, have already been reproduced in this country.[2]

As our English translations are in every case incomplete, the author has been obliged to quote from French editions, and like every other student of Froissart, he would like here to express his indebtedness to those two masterpieces of scholarship and industry, the editions of Siméon Luce and of Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove. The latter has been used for the second part of the Chronicles (Books III and IV), which are not included in the incomplete Luce edition. A prose translation of the verse passages has been given in the Notes; although these renderings are obviously unsatisfactory substitutes for the originals, it is hoped that they will be of some use to readers not familiar with medieval French.

INTRODUCTION

At a time when writers seldom thought of appealing to any but their immediate contemporaries Froissart was moved by the conviction that he was writing not only for his own age but also for future generations: "For I know well that after my death this noble and high history will be widely read". The success of the Chronicles has completely justified this bold conviction. Already during his lifetime Froissart's fame as a chronicler preceded him in his travels to the various courts of Europe. Subsequently, from the fourteenth century onward, his works were copied and re-copied in scores of manuscripts, often richly illuminated—a sure sign of the esteem in which they were held—and to-day they form some of the most valued treasures of many a European library. With the coming of printing they were prominent among the earliest books issued by the press: several French editions were printed prior to 1550, and a Latin translation also appeared in four editions before the end of the century, as well as the famous English translation made by John Bourcier for Henry VIII. During the following centuries, when most other medieval works were forgotten, numerous allusions in literature show that the Chronicles were still widely read. Finally, in more recent times, important editions have been published in Belgium, in France and in this country,[1]

in addition to many abridged versions and collections of extracts.

Nor is this the only evidence of the popular appeal of the Chronicles. They have also served as a favourite hunting-ground for the novelist in search of models of unusual stature. The story is told of Walter Scott, who, during a visit to France, was presented with a folio of Froissart for his signature; he took the volume and wrote in it: "This is my master", and added: "It is in Froissart that I found the germ of the historical novel; I can scarcely express my debt to the historians of ancient France; they have not only taught me how to make characters act and speak; I also owe them the idea of *Quentin Durward*. Soon I hope to derive a new work from the annals of your history, and being unable to joust with Froissart in a story of Charles the Bold, I shall at least try to imitate him".[1] Scores of novelists in both England and France have since availed themselves of Scott's discovery, and have drawn abundantly from the same source. We can justly claim, therefore, for Froissart a large share in the success of the historical novel.

Obviously the fourteenth century, with all its defects, stirs a resonant cord in the majority of readers. Few ages have been more artistic. Remove its colour, its standard of good manners, its love of fair language, and, yes, its chivalry, and humanity would be the poorer for it. To the Englishman, the age is that of the siege of Calais, of Cressy, Poitiers, Wat Tyler's rebellion, without which our national consciousness would be incomplete; but who could compute what these events would mean to us were it not for the consummate art of the man who placed

them on record? There's truth in the words of the poet, who exclaims as he gazes on the tombs of the kings in the Abbey of St. Denis :

> Ce n'eſt rien que les Rois ;
> D'un nombre que voici, à peine ou deux ou trois
> Vivent après leur mort, pour n'avoir été chiches,
> Vers les bons écrivains et les avoir fait riches.[1]

FROISSART

CHRONICLER AND POET

I

EARLY YEARS

IT is seldom one can speak of the early life of a medieval author. His work is often not only impersonal but also anonymous. It gives us no glimpse of his own way of life except for an occasional appeal for charity, which reminds us of his poverty. The author of a *Chanson de Roland*, of a *Mystère d'Adam*, or of an *Aucassin et Nicolette*, like many an artist in stone of the same period, has no biography. But in the fourteenth century, when Froissart wrote his chronicles, conditions were changing. Writers were beginning to realise that their works would be read not only by contemporary, but also by future generations, and with this recognition of their personal importance they begin to tell us of themselves as well as of their patrons. The change can readily be observed in Froissart; timid at first, a humble scribe in the palaces of kings, he is content in his early writings to observe and record the actions of others, not suspecting that the day would come when his readers would be interested in his biography; but as his reputation spread to European courts, where he was sought after by all who wished to have their deeds recorded, it became evident that the pen could

claim fame no less than the sword, and accordingly, in his later writings, the chronicler is more communicative concerning his own movements. It is mainly to these personal allusions that we owe our knowledge of Froissart's life and character; other sources of information are extremely scanty and amount to nothing more than a few references to his name in contemporary pay-rolls.

Jean Froissart was born at Valenciennes in 1337,[1] the same year in which Edward III of England, having decided to press his claims to the French throne, sent ambassadors to France to declare war on King Philip VI. The future chronicler thus came into the world at the outbreak of hostilities which were to last for more than one hundred years; he was to know of no other state but that of war, and he was born to an age, when, in his own words, more wondrous feats of arms were performed than could be found in any history.

Valenciennes, to which Froissart always refers as the "good, beautiful and gay town", belonged in the fourteenth century to the Province of Hainault, which was then one of the leading states of the Netherlands. Its ruler at the beginning of the century was Count William, who also governed the more easterly province of Holland. It was probably owing to the trading relations of this country that William was brought into close association with England. In any case he played an important part in English history when he came to the assistance of Queen Isabella, who appealed to him for help against her husband, Edward II, and Hugh Despenser, with the result that a force was raised in Hainault which invaded England and brought about the dethronement

of the King. The bond of friendship between the two countries was sealed by the marriage in 1327 of Edward III and Philippa, daughter of William, another daughter, Marguerite, having already become the wife of Louis, Emperor of Bavaria. Thenceforth, as ally of England, the Count was held in such great esteem by the English that Edward and his parliament, when considering the question of war with France, decided in the first place to seek his opinion before embarking on such a perilous enterprise.

Although, then, he spoke the French tongue and inherited the general stock of French traditions, Froissart, as a native of Valenciennes, was not a French subject. Valenciennes was allied first with one, then with the other great belligerent in the Hundred Years' War, and its inhabitants were extremely jealous of their independence. There is thus good reason to assume that it was largely to his place of birth that Froissart owed that cosmopolitan outlook which is one of the most distinctive features of the chronicles, and which is all the more remarkable seeing that he lived in an age when national sentiment, which was practically unknown in earlier times, was beginning to make itself strongly felt in European politics.

The Flemish provinces played a leading part in the economic life of Europe and none was more prosperous than Hainault, which is described in the Chronicles as the "good, fair, lovable country". It was renowned in the fourteenth century for the refinement of its court and its rulers took special interest in poetry and art. Count William's liking for poetry, which was shared by his daughter Philippa, Queen of England, is revealed to us by Jehan of

Condé,[1] who praises his patron as the "father of minstrels", and tells us that no poet could fail to find in him a benefactor. The Count's brother, John of Beaumont, was likewise renowned amongst his contemporaries as a model of chivalrous virtues and a patron of letters. It is well known how gallant a part he played in Isabella's expedition to England: how he marched out from Valenciennes to meet the fugitive, penniless Queen and accord her an honourable welcome, whilst knights of Hainault jousted along the road to amuse their royal guest and her young son; how he organised the expedition to England, undaunted by those who thought the enterprise too dangerous; to the faint-hearted he replied that he had only to die once and that he would sooner die in the service of this noble lady, who had been driven from her kingdom, than otherwise, "for every knight should do his utmost to help women and maidens in distress". We know too how the same John of Beaumont was admired in London as he rode beside the Queen, mounted on a black palfrey presented him by the city, through streets bedecked with hangings, whilst a fountain in Cheap Street poured forth red and white wine to celebrate the people's rejoicing at Isabella's victory. It was John of Beaumont moreover who inspired the work which Froissart was to take as his model, for it was at his request, and with his collaboration, that Jehan le Bel, Canon of Liège, composed his chronicle of the reign of Edward III, including the Scottish wars in which John had taken part as ally of the English.

The refinement of the aristocracy moreover was shared by the people of Flanders generally. Flemish merchants thought of other things besides commerce.

Inventories of their possessions show that their houses were filled with objects of luxury, vases of gold and silver, tapestries and other treasures. Burgesses in the principal towns had their literary academies or Puys, formed originally under the patronage of the Holy Virgin Mary and now devoted largely to the encouragement of the arts. That of Valenciennes was constituted in 1228, its statutes enacting that members were to attend Mass, take part in religious processions, and meet at "joyous repasts". Several of Froissart's poems which were "crowned" by these bodies show the persistence of the religious tradition, whilst others bear evidence to a more profane character, and particularly to that fondness for grotesque parody which was always a feature of the robust medieval burgess.

It is also significant that some of the great movements which mark the fourteenth century as an age of transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, manifested themselves in the first place in Flanders. It was thus the democracy of Flanders, rich and independent, that was the first to raise the standard of revolt against the medieval social system, and Valenciennes itself furnishes a good example of the manner in which these good towns treasured their liberties. In 1364, when Duke Albert wished to levy certain taxes on its burgesses they refused to pay, saying that they would not be treated like the citizens of France: "If we did as they do in Paris and in France we should be slaves and many of our weavers would leave our town to settle elsewhere, and perhaps, as we have good reason to fear, we should never see the end of such exactions".

All these circumstances have to be remembered in

connection with the vast literary production of the Netherlands in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which, in turn, is also to be associated with the part played by Flanders in the artistic Renaissance of the same period. "Modern naturalism", it has been said, "was born in France in the middle of the fourteenth century under the sole influence of Flemish masters." These were substituting a new form of art for the idealism of the Middle Ages and were replacing the impersonal symbolic figures of earlier times by human likenesses. The evolution was not complete in Froissart's day, it was to be consummated only in the fifteenth century in the remarkable realism of the brothers van Eyck, but Froissart must have been familiar with many of the artists whose work contributed to the change, particularly with his compatriot Andrew Beauneveu, the painter and sculptor employed by Charles V, and also by the Duke of Orleans to decorate his palace at Mehun, for the Chronicles tell us of the great esteem in which this famous artist was held by his contemporaries: "There was then in no country any man who could surpass or even equal this great master Andrieu, and none had executed so many good works in France or in Hainault, his native country, or in the Kingdom of England".[1]

Nothing is known of Froissart's parentage. A Mahieu Froissart is mentioned in a document dated 1300 concerning the town of Beaumont, and an Everard Froissart, designated as a merchant, is referred to in another document of 1309 relating to the neighbouring town of Thuin,[2] but as the name was fairly common in France in the Middle Ages there is no special reason to suppose that the chronicler was descended from either of these. Some biographers

have thought that his father was a painter of armorial bearings, but this supposition was based upon the evidence of one of his poems which was altogether insufficient. It is more probable that he was related to a family of money-changers which inhabited the town of Solesmes near Valenciennes, for he reveals an intimate knowledge of this profession in his poem, *Le Dit du Florin*, whilst another passage of the *Buisson de Jeunesse*, which states that he was reproached in his youth for writing poetry instead of making money, also tends to show that he belonged to bourgeois and probably business circles. In any case his father had no claims to distinction, otherwise, judging from Froissart's vanity in such matters, he would certainly have been mentioned in either the Poems or the Chronicles. Nothing more definite can at present be advanced with regard to his parentage, and we are therefore totally at a loss to explain the chronicler's advancement in early life.

On the other hand, in the *Espinette amoureuse*, the "Thorn of Love", we have a long account of Froissart's boyhood, probably the best account of the early years of any medieval author. His indulgence in childish reminiscences, which others might think too trivial to record, confirms his boast that he has never grown to despise the things of childhood. He loved amusement as a boy, he says, and he has remained unchanged in later life :

> En mon jouvent tous tels estoie
> Que trop volentiers m'esbatoie,
> Et tels que fui encor le sui.[1]

From the picture he draws for us we can well say that his childhood was spent, like that of Charles d'Orleans, "without care or melancholy". He can still recount

some fifty boyish games at which he played in his youth, a feat few people could emulate, even though the list, like his, included such ancient and commonplace pastimes as the making of mud-pies and tying cotton to butterflies' legs. He was attracted by beauty "like the moth to the candle",[1] and at school he evidently found his girl comrades the most attractive features of his lessons, and sought to win their good grace by offerings of glass rings, brooches, pears and apples. He was made to learn Latin, he says rather dolefully, and was beaten when he neglected his lessons; but a flogging would produce little effect, for he was no sooner out of sight of his master than he fell to fighting with his comrades, and would often return home with rent clothing, which again meant punishment. In spite of that, as soon as he saw another boy in the road he would sally forth for another battle. In later life he can look back upon these escapades with no thought of misspent time, and he rejoices that a chaplet of violets for his sweetheart gave him more pleasure then than a gift of twenty marks from a count in after years.

It has been concluded from one line of the same poem that Froissart was a weak and delicate boy,[2] but it is difficult to reconcile this interpretation with the above description of high-spirited youth or with his statement that he has no liking for less boisterous games such as dice and chess. Obviously the words "feeble and tender" in the passage in question refer not to the poet's health but to his tender years, as in at least one other passage of the same poem:

> Moult me trouva foible et tendre
> Amours quant il si haut me fist tendre
> Comme en amer.

We have another sidelight on the poet's youthful nature when he relates how already at the age of twelve he was fond of dancing and carolling and listening to minstrels—probably those same minstrels who, as he tells us elsewhere, could he heard in the market places singing tales of recent wars. In winter, when he could not play by the streams, he would read romances, especially those treating of love, and it was thus that his heart fell a victim to the god of Love, so that he longed for the time when he could call himself a Lover. He had learnt the doctrine of Chrestien de Troyes, Guillaume de Lorris and a hundred other medieval poets, and knew that without Love a man could never aspire to noble virtues :

> Car qui n'aime ou qui n'a aimé
> (Quoi qu'on ait l'omme en ce blasmé)
> Ja n'aura vraie cognoissance
> Ne en bonnes vertus puissance.

The rest of the poem relates how the wish was fulfilled. As he was sitting one May morning, soon after sunrise, beneath a hawthorn, watching the trees and listening to the song of the birds, Juno, Pallas and Venus appeared before him, and, recalling the episode of Paris and the apple, asked him what he thought of Paris' choice. To the delight of Venus the poet upheld the decision of Paris, and the goddess, to reward him, promised him such a lady as king, emperor, duke or count might envy, one of whom he would say, a thousand times a week :

> Qu'onques tele ne fu Helainne
> Pour qui Paris ot tant de mauls.

He thought at first that this was a dream, but he was soon convinced that he had seen the goddess herself. One morning he met a damsel reading the romance

Cleomades.[1] Her face was fair, her complexion fresh, and her eyes as bright as one could wish; her hair was fairer than flax and her hands as beautiful as the most noble lady on earth could desire; her voice as she read was more pleasant than the notes of the lyre and when she smiled her mouth was sweet beyond description. In short, the poet was wounded by the god of Love; but Cupid, unfortunately, directed no shaft at the heart of his lady, or perhaps, as he imagines, her heart was already pierced. He lends her a romance, he writes for her ballads and virelais, declaring himself her faithful serving man, and craving her pity, but all in vain; he learns that she is about to marry another. He is filled with despair, and for three months he lies at death's door, sick with fever, awaiting the fate of Tristan, who died of love:

> Je finerai ensi que fist Tristans,
> Car je morrai pour amer par amours.

But the poet, after all, did not die of grief: he wisely avoided an untimely issue by deciding that life, with the memory of the beauty of her who caused his wounds, was better than death. So when his strength returned he decided to travel beyond the seas, and, like Lancelot quitting Guinevere, he bids farewell to his lady, telling her that although his body is going yonder his heart remains in her keeping:

> Au departir de vous, madame,
> Le coer ne scet se le cors part,
> Car tousjours tire a vous par m'ame.[2]

He embarked at a port where there were many strangers (probably Calais) and set out to sea. There, amidst a storm and the cries of the sailors, instead of putting his hands to the ropes, he composed a rondeau

to " joyous melancholy ", which makes a man forget his troubles and fills his heart with gladness. He thus came to a country " which hates peace more than war ", but where every stranger is sure of a welcome.

Such is Froissart's own account of the reasons which made him leave his native land for England. Are we to take his confidences literally? Earlier critics never expressed a doubt in the matter. Scott,[1] resuming the comments of a French biographer, refers with sympathy to the poet's " ill-fated and deep-rooted passion for a lady of Flanders ". Other biographers on the contrary simply dismiss the story as a pure poetical invention.[2] Both these views are probably exaggerated. In the first place it is certain that Froissart was of too easy-going a temperament ever to allow a love affair to upset his peace of mind, and when we read of his despair and his thoughts of death we cannot help recalling the lines of his contemporary Christine de Pisan, who warns us against taking a lover's protestations too seriously[3]: although, she says, all talk of dying, she has never yet seen the cemetery where they are buried. When, moreover, Christine adds that some disappointed lovers pretend to flee from France in their grief, it is possible that she was thinking precisely of Froissart, for she was almost certainly familiar with some, if not with all of Froissart's poetry. We are inclined to believe therefore that the poet is voicing his true sentiments when he states through the mouth of his lady that the suitor begging for pity is never so woeful as one would imagine from his languishing manner:

> Tels va merci criant
> Qui n'est mie si doulerous
> Com il se montre langerous.

On the other hand, so far as we can control the other biographical details contained in Froissart's poetry, we find that they are generally accurate and agree with the information derived from other sources. The poet also expressly tells us that this story is a true one. One must hesitate therefore before dismissing the lady whom Froissart is supposed to have loved as a purely fictitious personage. He has even gone so far as to give us an anagram in which he tells us that we can find his mistress's name, but it definitely discloses nothing more than the name of Marguérite, which throws no light on the lady's identity. In these circumstances, judging from the general tenor of the poem, the most plausible conjecture is that she was a person of rank whom the poet admired with the conventional freedom of the age. That Froissart belonged to some princely household before his departure for England there can be little doubt. He states that he had travelled to Avignon during the life-time of Pope Innocent VI, that is, before 1362[1]; furthermore, when he left for England he had letters of introduction to the Queen, and his subsequent success and friendships at the English court show that he was no novice in courtly etiquette; we can only conclude that he had moved already in high circles, but we have unfortunately no definite clue as to his early patrons.

We ought finally to note that when Froissart travelled to the sea-port he was not alone, but was in the company of a number of people from whom he desired to conceal the fact that he was writing verse, and the party was well provided with horses along the road. He does not mention the names of any of this company, but the coincidence of dates and the

reference to *avolés*, or strangers, at the port, make it appear probable that Froissart crossed the channel with some of the many hostages who were then proceeding to England in execution of the terms of the Treaty of Bretigny, for we find the same term *avolés* (of which we have few other examples, in this special sense) employed by Guillaume de Machaut,[1] in his description of the place at which the Duke of Berry embarked on the same occasion.

II

THE QUEEN'S SECRETARY

FROISSART arrived in England in 1361, just after the signing of the Treaty of Bretigny. Times had indeed changed since the early days of King Edward, when the chronicler Jehan le Bel wrote that English knights were little esteemed, that their armour was old-fashioned, and that no one spoke of their courage and prowess.[1] Edward, by this time, had won half the territories of France and had just fixed the ransom of his royal prisoner at four million crowns. So great was his prestige that he was styled by his contemporaries "the second King Arthur". Diana, who according to poets[2] had prophesied the victories of this northern island to Brutus, the legendary founder of its dynasty, had kept her word. English knights were then rich with the spoils of their campaigns in the fertile provinces of France, and now that there was a lull in hostilities, all were intent upon pleasure:

> Car c'est terre de grant deduit,
> Et les gens sont si bien duit
> Que tout dis voelent en joie estre.[3]

The magnificent assemblies at Westminster and Windsor, or the revellings of the Black Prince and the beautiful Joan of Kent at Berkhamstead might well remind the chronicler of the stories of romance and of the Golden Age of the Celtic hero which he had loved to read in his youth.

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THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES AT TARBES.

[*face p.* 14.

On his arrival in England he was presented to Queen Philippa, who was renowned for her kindness to her compatriots. He had brought with him a chronicle of recent events, from Poitiers onwards, which he presented to the "great and noble Queen", who received it with much joy, he tells us, and richly rewarded him. Thenceforth he was attached to the royal household as secretary to the Queen, for whom he wrote gallant ditties and love poems, an office that furnishes interesting evidence of the close relation between history and poetry. Fortune could never have smiled more favourably upon the chronicler. "She made and created me", he says, in gratitude to his royal mistress, and he repaid the obligation with many a charming portrait of his benefactress.[1] "A better queen never went to England since the time of Queen Geneviere, wife of King Arthur," he says; "she was tall and stately, wise, cheerful, humble, devout, generous and courtly; she was adorned with every noble virtue and was beloved of God and all the world." He evidently enjoyed her confidence and learnt from her own lips the story of her youthful romance—her first meeting with Edward, when both were children, at Valenciennes, her grief when the young prince took leave of her, and her subsequent marriage with the King, which was not without a touch of sadness, for she was but a child of thirteen when she arrived in England, and we can well understand that she "wept tenderly" on the departure of her friends of Hainault, who had accompanied her. The episode is all the more interesting as romance seldom entered into the question of marriage in Froissart's days.

At the English court Froissart "delighted", to

use his own expression, in the society of lords and ladies with whom he discussed the eternal themes of these gallant circles, Arms and Love, just as Chaucer, at the same court, talked on the "Chronicles of Kings and of other policies", and amused his audience by "piping and harping, singing lays or martial deeds". But of the thirty-seven squires attached to the King's household for the entertainment of this princely company none could vie with the Queen's secretary when the theme turned upon the chronicles of kings. Froissart was soon recognised as the court chronicler, which was no mean distinction in a world so interested in chronicles. His success, he explains, was due to the Queen's protection, for it was from affection for his royal mistress that noble lords, dukes, barons and knights readily admitted him to their company and related to him all they knew of the events he wished to record, or furnished him with money to pursue his researches elsewhere.[1]

At the same time we can infer from his long list of friends and patrons at the English court that the chronicler had personal qualities which also contributed to his popularity. He was no dull scribe: he frankly enjoyed the company of his fellows and shunned solitude, "which makes a man melancholy".[2] He would never miss a fête or a joust, at no matter what distance,[3] and was ever ready, in his own words, "to sing and dance and talk and laugh". It was this sociable disposition, as much as the Queen's protection, that would win for him the friendship of such a gallant knight as Edward Despenser, "the most honourable, gallant and valiant knight in all England, much beloved of ladies, for the most noble said that no feast was perfect if Sir Despenser was not present".

Froissart and he would ride together, talking of the days of Edward II, when the knight's grandfather was accused of treason and executed, and his property confiscated by Queen Isabella. Their conversation reveals the chronicles in the making. When passing the towns which formerly belonged to the Despenser family Froissart's companion would say: "Froissart, do you see that big tower with the high steeple?"—"Yes, Sir, why do you ask me?"—"It ought to have been mine, but there was a bad queen in this country who robbed us of everything". And so the chronicler learnt the history of forty such castles in different parts of England.

During his stay in England Froissart lacked neither friends nor money. The Queen was a constant benefactress: she never tired of giving, he says; from the King he received a hundred florins in one sum, and he also expresses his gratitude to the Princess Isabella and to Blanche of Lancaster whose untimely death he mourns not only for sentimental reasons:

> Elle mourut jeune et jolie,
> Environ de vingt et deux ans,
> Gaie, lie, friche esbatans.

Other benefactors included the Duke of Hereford, Walter de Manny, his compatriot, the Earl of Pembroke, besides Despenser, who was always ready with gifts of florins and horses.[1]

But his list of patrons, already imposing, was not restricted to English nobility, even during his stay at the English court. A great number of French knights were then in England, including the Dukes of Orléans, Anjou, Berry, and Bourbon, and burgesses from all the larger towns of France, who were detained as hostages pending the fulfilment of the conditions

of the Treaty of Bretigny. These hostages had been entrusted to the Mayor of London, who had received orders to treat them with courtesy, and they were allowed to move freely about the city, to hunt and hawk in the neighbourhood, and to entertain lords and ladies as they pleased. When the Duke of Anjou left England without leave in 1364 King John himself returned to London to apologise for his son's departure and Froissart composed for this event a Pastourelle to welcome the King, representing the rejoicing of shepherds and shepherdesses who witnessed the royal procession on the road from Eltham to Westminster; the poem was probably recited during the great festivities, the dancing and carolling of lords, ladies and damsels, held in the King's honour. It would appear to be to this period that Froissart's statement that he was of the household of King John refers, and if this was so, he must have frequented the Savoy Palace, which was specially prepared as a residence for John. He would here witness the "revelling, dinners and suppers" in which the two kings indulged in common, the Thames affording a convenient and secret means of communication between the Savoy and Westminster. The chronicler was known to many of the knights who assembled on these occasions; he received gifts from the Duc de Bourbon; Enguerrand de Coucy, the young knight who danced and sang so well that he was welcome in any company, whether French or English, often filled his hands with florins; above all, his relations with Guy de Blois, who figures so often in the Chronicles as his patron during the writing of the later books, seem to date from this period.

There is one name we miss amongst Froissart's

relations at the English court, that of Geoffrey Chaucer. Both writers must have frequented the same circles. If we admit that Chaucer's wife Philippa was daughter of Sir Payn de Roët and therefore compatriot of Froissart, the latter had special reasons to be interested in the English poet who was pursuing the same career as he, and who, by 1367, was to achieve a certain fame as the king's "dilectus valettus". Then again Froissart's great friend, Sir Richard Stury, the man whom the chronicler most longed to see in England when he returned in his old age, was also a friend of Chaucer, for they were sent together on a mission to Montreuil-sur-mer in 1377. But although both poets were certainly known to each other there is no mention of their acquaintance in their works. The name of Jeffrois Chaucies[1] appears in the Chronicles only in the account of the mission already referred to. On the other hand Chaucer does not mention his illustrious French colleague, although he frequently imitates his poetry. This silence we can only explain as a matter of tradition; the poet's position as one of a company of thirty-seven squires at the English court still counted for little, and it was not likely that Froissart, who relates so many interviews with princes and knights, would realise how a conversation between him and another poet could have any interest in his narrative of affairs of state.

Froissart had spent some four years at the English court when he decided to visit Scotland. Scotland, as it was represented in those days, could offer no attractions to the Southerner, for it was usually depicted by early French writers as a sterile, poverty-stricken land; Jean de Meung, for instance, the author of the second part of the Roman de la Rose, a work certainly

known to Froissart, in personifying Hunger, says that she lives in a stony field in the depths of Scotland, where corn or shrub never grow, and where Ceres, the God of the harvest, never penetrates. It was not such descriptions as this that would encourage Froissart to leave the gay atmosphere of Westminster and undertake the long and solitary journey, for he was too fond of comfort and pleasure. If he decided to abandon the luxurious life of the English court to travel North it was because he was using as the basis of his history an early chronicle, that of Jehan le Bel, of which a large section was devoted to Scottish affairs, and although he had the greatest respect for his predecessor, he was well aware that he, like any other man, could not be expected to know everything. His integrity as a historian therefore demanded that he should visit personally the places and the men who figured in his chronicle. His visit to Scotland is thus one of the first proofs of that zeal and conscientousness which characterise his whole career, and transform his biography into a long record of travels in search of information.

He arrived in Scotland in 1365 with letters of recommendation from Queen Philippa to David Bruce and to a number of Scottish barons including Lord Douglas, Robert Vescy (apparently a deformation of Robert Erskine) and the Earl of March, who all received him most hospitably on hearing that he was clerk to the Queen. King David was then on friendly terms with England, for two years earlier he had agreed to adopt one of Edward's sons as his successor. He had other reasons too for regarding with special favour this young clerk of Valenciennes. In his youth he had spent several years in France and he spoke

French fluently. It is difficult to say how long he had spent at the French court for the various accounts differ, but at any rate, he had been richly entertained by Philip and had stayed long enough in France to become familiar with the splendour of Philip's court, and with those ideals of chivalry for which the French court was so famed—ideals which were to prove as fatal to King David at Nevill's Cross as to the French king at Cressy. But according to these chivalrous standards it mattered little whether a knight were victorious or not provided he acquitted himself with valour in the face of the enemy, and King David, judged by these standards, had as good cause as any other to be proud of the part he had played in the recent wars. He would have personal reasons therefore for welcoming Queen Philippa's chronicler, who was recording the exploits of contemporary chivalry for the example and encouragement of the ages to come.

Froissart stayed for three months with King David, and he had the good fortune, he tells us, during this time, to accompany the King on a tour throughout the greater part of his kingdom. He thus visited the most important places mentioned in his history and was able to discuss Scottish events with the men who had taken part in them. The information obtained in this manner enabled him to enlarge considerably upon the narrative of Jehan le Bel, which had made no reference to such items as the duel between Alexander Ramsay and William Montague beneath the walls of Roxburgh. The King, says the chronicler, often spoke to him of the battle of Nevill's Cross, in which he had been made prisoner, and he still carried in his head the point of the arrow with which he was

wounded in the battle; the wound, we are told, still caused the King pain, whenever there was a new moon.

Froissart stayed for fifteen days in the Castle of Dalkeith, "a small castle, but well provided with rooms and buildings, arranged in a big square tower, which does not fear attack from engines or catapults, and is situated on a small rock surrounded by a river which is not too big, except when swollen by rains".[1] He there met William Douglas and his son James, who was afterwards to win a prominent place in the Chronicles by his gallantry at the Battle of Otterburn. the countess too had played a notable part in recent events by prevailing on Edward, some ten years earlier, to desist from the destruction of Edinburgh. It was probably she herself who related this episode, which forms one of the chronicler's most attractive pages:

> Whilst the King of England was at Edinburgh the Countess of Douglas, sister of the Earl of Mar, a most noble, beautiful, and gentle lady, came to see him. The arrival of the lady greatly pleased the king for he took much delight in seeing beautiful ladies. And the good lady had already sent to the king good wines, for she lived some five leagues from Edinburgh, in a castle called Dalkeith, and for this gift the king was very grateful. The reason why the good lady came there I will tell you. She had heard that the king had threatened to burn, on his departure, the town of Edinburgh, whither she resorted frequently, for it is the Paris of Scotland, although it is not fortified; so the Countess, when she had spoken to the king and had been graciously received by him asked him laughingly if he would grant her a favour. The king, not suspecting the reason for which she had come, asked her to name it. And the lady begged of him that he would refrain, for the love of her, from burning the town of Edinburgh. "Certainly, lady," said the king, "I would do greater things even than that for the love of you, and I grant you with pleasure that the town shall suffer no harm at my hands nor at the hands of my people." And the Countess thanked him many times and took leave of the king and barons and returned to her castle at Dalkeith.[2]

Besides being entertained at Dalkeith Froissart was also the guest of the Earls of Mar, of March, of Fife and of Sutherland, and he carried away such happy memories of their hospitality that he asks in a poem written in later life whether he will ever see these friends again, for when he recalls this far-off country he is reminded of old age, which is creeping upon him, and of the shortness of life, which passes like a shadow. Before he can undertake such a journey again, he declares, he will be hoary-headed and feeble :

> Mès je serai lors tous chenus,
> Foibles, impotens, mas et sombres.[1]

It is impossible to trace the whole of Froissart's itinerary in Scotland. He tells us definitely that he visited Stirling, where he spent three days, but for the rest we can only judge from his descriptions of places which seem to reveal a first-hand knowledge. Aberdeen he probably visited, for he often refers to it as the entrance to the wild country, as he calls the Highlands, and he mentions in one of his poems an ashen pier, which served as a landing-place for the fishing boats. There is probably a personal reminiscence too in his description of Edinburgh, when he states that the rock on which the castle stands is so high and so steep that a man can scarcely climb it without resting two or three times.

His return journey from Scotland stands out with singular relief in the literature of the times as it furnishes the theme of one of the most pleasing of his poems. He depicts himself to us riding a grey horse, Grisel, which is also laden with his pack, and he has a greyhound by his side. As he reaches the end of a long day's march he imagines he hears the conversation of these two beasts comparing their lot, like the

animals in a fable of La Fontaine. The dog complains that he is weary and asks when they shall eat and rest. To this the horse replies that it is he, who has carried man and baggage over hill and dale, that has most reason to complain. The dog shares his master's morsel and is free to run where he pleases, whilst he, Grisel, knows no other language but that of the spur. The dog retorts by comparing their treatment on arrival home: Grisel, the horse, is cared for and fed, whereas he is put behind a door to guard the house, and, if aught happen, if bread, meat or cheese is stolen, it is he who is blamed and beaten. The dialogue is cut short by the sight of a high steeple which announces their journey's end, whereupon, enlivened by the thought of food, Grisel, at the greyhound's request, breaks into a gallop:

> Froissart atant vint à la ville,
> Et la faillirent leur concile.

It is interesting also to note that another of Froissart's poetical works was suggested by his reminiscences of Scotland, the Romance *Meliador*, the plot of which is laid for the greater part in North Britain. It was probably suggested in the first place by Froissart's visit to Stirling, for the poem bears distinct traces of his recollections of the castle as we find them described in the Chronicles. "The castle", he says, "is built on a high rock twenty leagues from Edinburgh, twelve from Dunfermline and thirty from St. Johnstone. It was called in the time of King Arthur Sinandon or Smandon, and I was told during my visit that the knights of the Round Table used to resort there." Possibly he had learnt some Arthurian legends associated with the castle, which afterwards gave him the idea of his poem.

Soon after his return to England Froissart started off again, this time for the continent. Passing through Sandwich he took the opportunity to remark upon the vessel which had been lying there in the harbour ever since Edward had presented it in 1363 to the King of Cyprus, who, through lack of means, had been unable to make use of it. We next hear of him at Brussels when he received on the 15th April, 1366 the sum of six muttons from the treasurer of Duke Wenceslas of Brabant, which is the first incident recorded of his relations with Wenceslas. He seems then to have returned to England, if the date he gives for his visit in September, 1366, to Berkeley Castle on the Severn is correct.[1] We can well understand why the chronicler was particularly attracted to this spot, for this "fine, good and strong castle" figures prominently in the opening chapters of the Chronicles as the place where Edward II was confined after his deposition. In the company of Edward Despenser, who had likewise good reason to be interested in the same episode, Froissart spent three days in this neighbourhood endeavouring to penetrate the mystery of the King's fate as a prisoner. He questioned an old squire who informed him that the late King had died the same year that he was brought to the castle "for his days had been shortened". Doubtless the old squire would recall rumours which have reached us through other sources but we are told no more of the conversation. With Thomas Berkeley the chronicler discussed the Battle of Poitiers and learnt of his host's unfortunate adventure, for when pursuing a Frenchman after the battle, he himself had been captured and had had to pay a ransom of six thousand nobles.[2]

When the Black Prince in the same year decided to

invade Spain on behalf of Don Pedro it was natural that Froissart should desire to accompany the expedition, and we find him at Bordeaux when the Black Prince was making his preparations during the latter months of the year for crossing the Pyrenees. But the departure was delayed, as the Princess was expected to give birth to a child, and Edward decided to await this event before leaving for Spain. Froissart was sitting at table on the 10th January, 1367, when the Marshal of Aquitaine entered and said to him, "Froissart, write and make note that our lady the Princess has given birth to a fine son, and that he has come into the world on the Day of Kings, and that he is the son of a King, for his father is King of Galicia, which has been given him by Don Pedro, and he is about to conquer the kingdom. So the child is of royal lineage and he will rightly be King".[1] Froissart well remembered these words in later years when relating the fate of Richard II, which so sadly belied the good omens announced at his birth.

A few days later, after the infant had been christened in the cathedral, Froissart accompanied the Black Prince to Dax. Here however, for some reason unknown to us, he was ordered by the Prince to return to the Queen in England.[2] Unfortunately he does not say for what reason he was recalled, but he utters no word of regret at this change of plans, which deprived him of the opportunity of witnessing the events in Spain which he was afterwards to record. We can only conclude that the Queen had an important motive in making him retrace his steps; in fact, it would seem that his services were required on this occasion for some affairs of state.

In June of the following year Froissart was again

in France as a member of the great retinue of 457 men and 1,280 horses which accompanied Lionel, Duke of Clarence on his journey through Paris, Burgundy and Savoy to Milan for his marriage with the daughter of the Duke of Milan.[1] The chronicler says nothing of the sumptuous entertainment provided by the French King in Paris, and it is only in his poetry that he describes at any length the equally brilliant reception which was given Lionel at Chambéry by the Count of Savoy, the uncle of the bride. The festivities lasted for three days and during this time six score of the most beautiful ladies, richly arrayed in silks and pearls, and more indefatigable than the minstrels, danced and sang from night to morning. Froissart must have been a most prominent figure, for it was he who provided the words for the carolling and we can well excuse the pride with which he states that his verse won the approbation of the revellers. No sooner was one virelai finished than another was started; to that which Froissart composed, complaining of his mistress's cruelty, his lady herself replied with another, of delightful irony, declaring that her lover fasts according to convention but that that does not prevent him from leading a gay life, and she rejoices to note that his melancholy becomes him so well:

A seul et a compaignie
Veut tout dis, quoi qu'on lui die,
Par droit usage jeuner,
Et pour ce ne lait il mie
A mener joyeuse vie,
Dont, au voir considerer,
Je ne sui onques si lie,
Ne de coeur si envoisie,
Que quant je voi fort penser
Celui qui d'amer me prie,
Car toute merancolie
Li affiert bien a porter.[2]

An assembly which could command and appreciate such repartee was evidently as witty as it was elegant!

Froissart followed the party to Milan where there was even more revelling than at Chambéry and Paris. Unfortunately he only alludes very briefly to this part of the celebrations and says nothing of his meeting with the great Italian Petrarch who was amongst the guests of honour on this occasion. It was once thought that Chaucer was also present, in attendance on his patron Lionel, but a recent discovery shows that he received a warrant for crossing the channel on the 27th July of the same year, and although he may then have been proceeding to Milan, he certainly was not present during the marriage celebrations.[1]

On leaving Milan the chronicler received from the Count of Savoy a present of twenty gold florins and this enabled him to visit Rome, travelling at his ease, like a man of substance, with horses for himself and his baggage.[2] Italy was evidently beginning to exercise that attraction for writers which was to become so pronounced in the following centuries, but Froissart, adhering to the general medieval tradition expressed by Brunetto, who states that the French language is the most graceful and pleasing of all languages, seems to have been little influenced by Italian writers, nor was he deeply moved by the spectacle of the ruins of Rome's ancient glory which was to inspire his countrymen of a later generation. But if he gives us no account of his journey or of his impressions of Italy (except that he tells us that he passed through Bologna and Ferrara, where he met the King of Cyprus, who made him a present of forty ducats), it is doubtless not because he shut his eyes to the things around him, but merely because of his belief that his own experiences

had no bearing on the subject of his Chronicles. We know how keenly he observed and interrogated during his other travels and we can safely assume that the months which he spent in such a stimulating atmosphere as that of Italy in the fourteenth century contributed a fair share to his general knowledge and understanding of men and events which formed an indispensable background to his wide investigations.

It was during, or soon after, the chronicler's tour in Italy that he was called upon to write what must have been for him one of the saddest pages of his history, namely the death of Queen Philippa, which took place on the 15th August, 1369. Both the Chronicles and Poems show the extent of his grief at the loss of his benefactress. Froissart has recorded the deaths of many kings and princes, usually with indifference; he has seldom struck such a tragic note as in the opening lines of the Lai on the death of the Queen:

Morte est et ensevelie
La bonne dame
Qui en toute honneur, sans blame,
Usa sa vie.

Never had death, though "the common lot of mankind", seemed to him more unjust:

Quant la bonne et belle
La sage et loyelle
Sans juste querelle,
Mort, tu nous as pris,
Fausse t'en appelle,
Et très desloyelle,[1]

and in an equally pathetic passage of the Chronicles[2] he recalls her many good deeds, her readiness to assist any knight or lady in need of help, her charity to all her people, and her unfailing generosity to her

fellow countrymen of Hainault. He well remembers the sepulchre which the good Queen had had sculptured in Westminster Abbey during her lifetime, and he records her dying wish that the King should be buried beside her, "when God should do His will with him". But whilst her body was to rest in the Abbey, her soul, the chronicler tells us, was joyfully carried to heaven by angels, for never in her life had she done aught to forfeit the glory of Paradise.

III

WENCESLAS OF LUXEMBOURG AND GUY DE BLOIS

After the death of Queen Philippa, Froissart had few friends left in England. Louis de Bourbon, Guy de Blois and other French knights had returned to France, and now that hostilities had started again many English knights had crossed the Channel. It was probably for this reason that the chronicler, after his return from Italy, settled in his native country, where he was sure of finding patrons. His principal benefactor at this time was Duke Wenceslas, son of the blind King of Bohemia, who had been the patron of Guillaume de Machaut, the master of Chaucer, as well as of Froissart, in the art of poetry. The Duke and his wife Jeanne held a sumptuous court at Brussels, of which many a lively description has been handed down to us by contemporary poets, particularly by Eustache Deschamps, who, in a well-known rondeau, expresses his regret at leaving the many good things he enjoyed as the guest of the Duke :

> Adieu beauté, leesse et tous deliz,
> Chanter, dancer et tous esbatemens ;
> Cent mille foys a vous me recommans.
>
> Brusselle adieu, ou les bains sont jolys,
> Les estuves, les fillettes plaisans ;
> Adieu beauté, leesse et tous deliz,
> Chanter, dancer et tous esbatemens.

Belles chambres, vins de Rin et molz liz,
Connins, plouviers et capons et fesans,
Compaignie douce et courtoises gens ;
Adieu beauté, leesse et tous deliz,
Chanter, dancer et tous esbatemens ;
Cent mille fois a vous me recommans.[1]

The household accounts of the Duke and Duchess[2] furnish ample testimony of their liberality to artists and writers and Froissart's name is frequently mentioned. In August, 1369 he received twenty muttons for a "new French book", and in the following year, or early in 1371, he was staying at Brussels as the guest of Wenceslas when he met the English diplomatist Richard Stury, who afterwards rendered him such useful services during his last visit to England. It is in recognition of this unfailing generosity and hospitality that the poet remarks :

Le duc et la ducoise aussi
De Braibant moult je regrasci,
Car il m'ont tout dis esté tel
Que eux, le leur et leur hostel
Ai-je trouvé large et courtois.[3]

After his defeat at the battle of Bastweiler the Duke was a prisoner for twelve months or more in the hands of the Duke de Julers, and sadly missed his " dogs, birds, woods and rivers " and the " revelling, jousting and dancing " of his court at Brussels.[4] He then, to console himself, entertained a literary correspondence with his favourite poet, partly in prose and partly in verse, requesting that Froissart should read and examine his poetry, efface or add where necessary, and begging him to excuse his ignorance. Furthermore, on the Duke's release, Froissart celebrated his return in a pastourelle depicting the rejoicing of his subjects :

Que nous ravons no capitaine,
Li duc au courage loyal,
Qui est issus de sanc royal,
Dont bien resjoir nous devons.[1]

The relations between Wenceslas and the poet, to whom the Duke refers in his accounts as his "dearly beloved Jehan Froissart", seem to have been in the nature of a literary partnership, and the poet's statement that his Romance *Meliador* includes all the "songs, ballads, rondeaux and virelais" composed by the Duke during his lifetime[2] shows that their friendship lasted till the death of Wenceslas in 1383.

It was a few years after his return that Froissart wrote the *Buisson de Jeunesse* (1373) which is important for its biographical details. The poet states that he had neglected the gifts which Nature had bestowed upon him; whereas his true vocation was the gentle art of poetry he had fallen into the error that was common amongst the people around him, who esteemed money more than poetry, and had abandoned his art for a more lucrative profession. Even his patrons had failed him as all their wealth passed into the hands of tax-collectors, who hoarded money and built mansions for their heirs, so that nothing was left for poets. Instead therefore of "praising God and serving the world", as Nature had fitted him to do, he had engaged in commerce, for which he was as little suited as for the profession of soldier. Philosophy, his interlocutor, upbraids him for this, and bids him recall the inspiration of former days: let him at any rate name his patrons and possibly their heirs will take example from them.

Curiously enough the date of the poem coincides with the date usually given for the completion of the

First Book of Chronicles, but we have still no very clear idea of the circumstances in which this book was written. As it mentions the death of Queen Philippa parts of it were composed after 1369, but it is also significant to note that the account of the early events of Edward's reign and of the wars in Brittany makes no mention of the chronicler's own journeys and researches, which are described only in the later versions. It seems probable therefore that much of this early chronicle was written before Froissart left England. His own account of its composition, which he gives in the preface, is as follows :

> True it is that I who have undertaken to compose this book have found pleasure (which has ever prompted me thereto), in frequenting many great and noble lords in France as well as in England and Scotland and in other countries, and have enjoyed their friendship. And I have ever enquired of them, to my best ability, concerning the wars and events which have taken place in these various lands, especially since the great battle of Poitiers, when the noble King John of France was captured, for before that I was still young in years and understanding. Nevertheless, on leaving school, I set out with all boldness to compile and compose in verse a history of the aforesaid wars, and took the book to England, and I there presented it to the great and most noble lady Philippa of Hainault, Queen of England, who received it gladly and kindly, to my great profit and advancement.
>
> Now, maybe this book is not compiled so accurately as these things demand. For feats of arms dearly achieved should be loyally attributed to those who valiantly strive to accomplish them. Therefore to do justice to all I have undertaken to continue this history . . . . at the request of a dear lord and master of mine, Robert of Namur, lord of Beaufort, to whom I owe love and obedience, and God grant that I may achieve ought which is pleasing to him.[1]

From this statement it appears that Froissart, dissatisfied with his first rimed chronicle, decided to

re-write his history in order to give a more accurate and more impartial account of the events recorded, and that he was encouraged in this undertaking by Robert de Namur. This knight was a brother-in-law of Edward III, having married Philippa's younger sister; he had fought in the English ranks from the time when he first came and offered his services to Edward during the seige of Calais, and he received from the English King a pension of three hundred pounds. Unfortunately we are unable to trace the exact time of Robert's patronage of Froissart; we can only say that his name is not included in the list of patrons given in the *Buisson de Jeunesse*, composed in 1373, and that the reference above quoted is suppressed in the later versions of the chronicles. As Robert was reproached for having caused the loss of the battle of Bastweiler (1371) in which he fought as ally of Wenceslas, by his handling of the reserves, (to which Froissart alludes in the *Prison Amoureuse*), it has been thought that the chronicler effaced his name in order not to displease his other patron. If this is so, it would appear that the First Book was composed before 1371; to accept the date of 1373 and at the same time to advance the above explanation of the omission of the name of Robert of Namur from the list of patrons given in the *Buisson de Jeunesse* of the same year is obviously contradictory.

Possibly, however, Robert's name was omitted for other reasons. M. Jeanroy, who has overlooked the above difficulty[1], considers that the poet's interlocutor in the poem Philosophy, was another patron, Guy de Blois. It seems just as probable that this was none other than Robert de Namur, and as the poet is addressing him in the second person, he would not

think it necessary to include his name in the list of former benefactors. There would then be no difficulty in assigning the composition of the First Book to the year 1373, which is the more satisfactory date, according to the testimony of the majority of the manuscripts.

A further question arising out of the *Buisson de Jeunesse* is that of the trade or profession for which Froissart deserted the Muses. The only clue to this problem is the passage of *Le dit du Florin*, which reveals an intimate knowledge of the profession of a money-changer; everyone, he says, does not know what happens to money behind the counter:

> Car il a la tous ses déduits,
> Ses bons jours et ses bonnes nuits,
> La se dort-il, la se repose,
> La le gratte-on, c'est vraie chose,
> La est frottés et estrillés,
> Lavés et bien appareilliés,
> Il en jouent com par enfance;
> Il le poisent a la balance;
> Au devant de lui mettent haises
> Avoir li font toutes ses aises;
> Afin qu'on ne le puist haper.
> Cil qui se mellent de draper
> En prendent la par grans puignies.[1]

The evidence is inconclusive, but it would seem to show that Froissart himself was at one time a money-changer. Whether this is so or not his venture into the business world was unsuccessful, and probably only increased his pecuniary difficulties. Records of his borrowings from Lombards,[2] which date from 1372, furnish good proof, not only of his lack of business capacity, but also of his improvident temperament, which he himself openly flaunts in the opening lines of *Le Dit du Florin*.[3]

It was not long, however, before an improvement took place in the poet's circumstances, for in 1373 he was appointed to the living of Les Estinnes. His nomination was probably due to Guy de Blois, whom Froissart had met during his stay in England. Les Estinnes was then a town of some importance which Guy had inherited together with Beaumont from John of Hainault. It was in 1373 that Guy came to reside at Beaumont, and in the *Buisson de Jeunesse*, Froissart, after expressing his indebtedness to "my lords of Blois", that is to say, to Guy and his two brothers, refers to his friendship with the former, who encouraged and stimulated him in his work:

> Et ossi mi seigneur de Blois,
> Loys, Jehan et Guy; des trois
> Moult acointés ja un temps fui
> Et especiaument de Gui
> Et encor le sui tous les jours,
> Car dalès li gist mes sejours:
> C'est li bons sires de Biaumont
> Qui m'amoneste et me semont.[1]

The benefice of Les Estinnes, which Froissart enjoyed for ten years, gave the chronicler means and leisure for his literary work. Much as he had appreciated the luxury of life at court there is no doubt that he liked still more the liberty which his "annual income" now assured him, for in spite of his ecclesiastical duties he seems to have been troubled by no preoccupation which could divert him from his labours as historian. He had neither "wife nor child" and was not worried therefore by any of those cares and expenses of upbringing and education of which his contemporary Eustache Deschamps complains in his realistic description of the trials of a parent:

Car qui les a, tenir fault grant mesnage,
Nourrice avoir, oyr braire et crier,
Vestir, chaucier, pain, vin, lait et fromage,
Buche, charbon, pain et char pour mengier,
Chambres et lis, drapeaux, linge a couchier,
Bers a bercier, et sentir leur ordure,
Six ou sept ans que ceste dance dure ;
Qui enfans a ne lui fault autre estrille ;
Ja bien n'aura fors que malaventure :
Aise sont ceulx qui n'ont ne filz ne fille.[1]

One third of his fortune, he tells us, was spent on his researches, one fourth was spent with inn-keepers —a sure proof that he enjoyed the society of his fellow beings, like the merchants whom he met in an inn on the road to Bearn : " They drink deeply ", he says, " for good company's sake ".

Such a light-hearted curé must have been a popular client on the benches of the inns of Les Estinnes, or at the table of his friend Gerard d'Obies, his patron's provost, whom he depicts in picturesque language as having no desire to save money for another world.[2] His imperturbable optimism and his liking for a good story can never have failed to raise the spirits, if not the morals, of his listeners :

Onques ne vous vi desconfi,
Mais, plein de confort et d'emprise,
Et c'est un point que moult je prise,
Je vous ai veu si joious,
Si joli et si amourous,
Que vous vivies de souhedier.[3]

" Happiness is better than riches " was his maxim, and he backs it with the most frank confession of improvidence. He makes no store of corn or oats, he does not build churches, nor ships, nor clocks, nor palaces, yet he can spend money more freely than any other man between Douai and Valenciennes. He can

only say in his own excuse that he gets better value for his money than other men. Such is the lively picture which he gives us of his habits, but its most interesting feature is his readiness to spend money on his books. This, at any rate, he knew was well spent :

> L'argent avez vous mis la bien,
> Je le prise sus toute rien,
> Car fait en avez mainte histoire,
> Dont il sera encore memoire
> De vous ens ou temps a venir.[1]

The costliness of his researches we can well understand, for although he had no longer the facilities which he had enjoyed in England he continued his history on a scale as vast as ever. If he had had at his disposal all the resources of a director of a modern intelligence bureau our nonchalant and pleasure-loving poet could scarcely have been better informed on the events which were being enacted in the four corners of France ; the naval battle of La Rochelle, the French and British campaigns in the south, Du Guesclin's invasion of Brittany, Lancaster's landing at Calais and his advance through Picardy ; all these events he recorded and added to the chronicle he had already written.

This task in itself, coupled with the writing of poetry, for some of the longest poems date from this period, would amply fill many years of labour, but with the conscientiousness of a true historian and artist he also began to recast his early work, incorporating notes on his journey to England and enlarging chapters which he had in the first place borrowed from Jehan le Bel. We find especially in this second version as it is called, a more circumstantial account of the wars in Brittany, which he was able to make as a result of

investigations which he had carried out during a personal visit to that province: "At the request of my lords and also for my own pleasure", he says, "I have traversed the greater part of Brittany and have enquired of lords and heralds concerning the wars, the assaults, the battles and the fine feats of arms which took place there about the year 1340".[1]

A reference contained in a document dated 12th December, 1381[2] shows that the chronicles had by this time attracted considerable attention. It states that the Duke of Anjou, the King's uncle, had ordered the seizure of fifty-six quires of chronicles which Froissart had sent to a certain Guillaume de Bailly to be illuminated, with the intention of presenting them to the King of England. This gift, it has been thought, was to have been made on the occasion of Richard's marriage with Anne of Bohemia. Anne was the niece of Froissart's patron Wenceslas, with whom she stayed for some time at Brussels, not daring to sail for England for fear of attack by Norman sailors, for it was rumoured that the French, who disliked the prospect of an alliance between England and Germany, intended to capture her. The Duke's action therefore in seizing the Chronicles may well have been prompted by patriotic motives, but as no other contemporary seems to have expressed disapproval on these grounds it is more probable that Froissart incurred the Duke's anger for personal reasons, by reporting his conduct on the death of Charles V, when the Duke, as soon as he knew that his brother's eyes were closed, seized the jewels and put them in a place of safety for his own use, and then, in spite of the late King's wishes, took the reins of government in his own hands.

Froissart was now engaged on his Second Book of Chronicles, which is devoted mainly to Flemish affairs. Civil war had broken out in Flanders in 1379; the Count of Flanders had been driven from his country by the *chaperons blancs* of Ghent and had sought the aid of the Duke of Burgundy and Charles VI of France, whilst the Flemish on their part had formed an alliance with the English, who had sent the Bishop of Norwich to their assistance. This struggle, which lasted till the peace of Tournay in 1385, was so disastrous that it seemed to the chronicler to be the work of the devil, " who is ever striving to make mischief where he sees peace and prosperity ", and its effects were felt even by " Turks and Saracens ", so important a place did the Netherlands then hold in the commercial world.

Froissart was doubtless an eye-witness of many of these events, judging from the occasional references to his movements at the time. A change of office now brought him into still closer relationship with Guy de Blois. He is mentioned for the last time as curé of Les Estinnes in 1382; henceforth he is designated chaplain to the Count and Canon of Chimay. If he had formerly congratulated himself on his independence as a curé he had now even greater cause for satisfaction; there is no better life than that of a canon, says his contemporary Eustache Deschamps; his bread comes to him while he sings, and he will not need to work to enjoy gold and silver plate, fine clothing and furs:

> Car en chantant est leur pain asséné
> En lieu seur, ja ne traveilleront,
> Leur dreçoir est d'or et d'argent doré,
> Vestent fins draps et bien se fourreront.[1]

In any case his duties interfered less than ever with his other activities. When Charles VI, then a boy of fourteen, marched against the Flemish in 1382 he was joined by Froissart's patron, who commanded the rearguard at the crossing of the River Lys. Campaigning in Flanders had its drawbacks in those days no less than in the twentieth century, and those who objected to rain and mud were agreed that :

Mauvais y fait longuement sejourner.[1]

Whilst Deschamps, who suffered bitterly from the lack of his usual comforts, brings down all the plagues of Egypt upon the rebels, Froissart depicts for us the shepherds' rejoicing on the arrival of the French, who had come to lower the pride of Bruges and Ghent :

Et quanque je puis desirer
C'est que je voie traire avant,
François, pour faire avaler,
L'orgueil de Bruges et de Gant.[2]

When the King organised his campaign of the following year Guy de Blois, although sick with fever, decided that it would not be honourable on his part to be idle whilst so many other lords and knights were fighting, and as he was unable to ride he was carried in a litter. The chronicler was thus given the opportunity of witnessing the rout of the English and of admiring with his own eyes the splendid parade of the French army beneath the walls of Bergues, which so impressed the enemy that they saddled their horses and fled secretly from the town.

But there were other events besides battles to record. At Easter, 1385, the chronicler was at Cambrai where he witnessed the double marriage between the son and daughter of his patron Albert of Bavaria

and the son and daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, which had been arranged by the Duchess of Brabant, the widow of his former patron and friend. As the King of France was present the ceremony was unusually brilliant, and at dinner, following mass, the King was served by the nobles on horseback. Jousts and revelling lasted for a week and a young knight of Hainault, whose tilting afforded the company great pleasure, received as a prize a gold brooch, inset with pearls, which the Duchess of Burgundy removed from her bosom.

Equally interesting to the chronicler was another marriage which took place shortly afterwards, that of Louis, only son of Guy de Blois, and Marie, daughter of the Duke of Berry. To celebrate this event he composed a pastourelle, representing shepherds and shepherdesses minding their sheep and proceeding with pipes, crook and basket to Bourges to join in the festivities :

> Ou moult gens sera li reveaus
> De bacclers et de fillettes,
> Et seront les noces estrettes
> De lyons et de fleurs de lys,[1]

and it is most likely that we owe to the same occasion the *Temple d'Honneur*, in which the father of the bridegroom expounds in allegorical form the duties of the knight and his lady.[2]

We next hear of the chronicler in Flanders, where Charles VI was making his vast preparations for the invasion of England. He gives us many a lively and picturesque detail of this fantastic scheme, which was of such enormous proportions that the French could not doubt that it meant the death of every Englishman. Even Deschamps, who was not usually optimistic, and

had no liking personally for the sea, prophesied a repetition of the Norman conquest and urged his princes to set sail without delay:

> Princes, passez sans point de demourée
> Vostres sera le pays d'Angleterre,
> Autrefois l'a un Normant conquestée:
> Vaillant cuer puet en tous temps faire guerre.[1]

When Froissart beheld the elaborate preparations, the huge fleet of ships, the masts of which in some cases were covered with sheet of gold, the vast supplies of every kind of article that man could need, food-stuffs, armour, clothing, kitchen utensils, bandages and ointments (not to speak of the great fortress which was being built in sections in Brittany for use at the landing), his delight was so unbounded that he declares that a man suffering from fever or toothache would have been cured of his pain in passing from one lot to another.[2] But he reminds us that it was the poor people of France who paid for all this and that the taxation was so heavy that many could no longer stay in the country.

Froissart stayed on at Sluys awaiting the development of events, obviously as interested as anyone to know whether the French would really set sail for England or not. In the meantime he was able to note the general effect produced in the country by the concentration of this large force: the scarcity of provisions, the losses of the poorer people, who were pillaged as though by an army of invaders. The hard-headed Flemish, moreover, were not easily deceived by any gilding of masts, and when the delay became still more protracted they could be heard saying sceptically to one another: "You will not see them leave for England this year. They think

they will conquer England, but they are mistaken. It is not so easily conquered. The English are very different from the French. What would they do in England? When the English were in France the French shut themselves up in fortresses. The English besieged them but they fled before the enemy like the lark before the hawk".[1]

The chronicler was also following closely the deliberations of the French and especially the discussions between the Duke of Berry and the Duke of Burgundy. Winter was approaching, the sea was already too rough for the journey, and the army was unpaid and living on plunder. When the Duke of Berry's advice finally prevailed and the scheme was abandoned, Froissart, suppressing his own opinion, was content to register the general dissatisfaction of the army, particularly of those knights who, like his patron the Dauphin of Auvergne, had lost nine-tenths of the fortunes they had spent upon stores. There can be little doubt that it was this event that inspired the poem of a contemporary which treats of the theme that the French talk while the English act:

> Et les François ont longue opinion,
> Et attendent c'on les veingne requerre
> En leur paiz, dont tout le cuer me serre.
> Par long conseil sans execution
> Est maint paiz destruit en temps de guerre;
> On le voit bien par France et Angleterre.[2]

IV

FROISSART'S VISIT TO ORTHEZ

With its many interludes, life at Blois, where Froissart was now spending most of his time with his patron Guy, must have been far from dull, but even so it was not sufficiently active for our chronicler, who was already thinking of investigating new fields. Spurred on by the conviction that his book would be famous after his death he was determined not to cease his labours so long as he had "wit enough to grasp the facts and strength enough to bear with the fatigue" of his work.[1] He had no sooner finished his account of the Flemish wars than he determined to record the wars which had been taking place between Spain and Portugal. But he was not satisfied with his knowledge of events in these countries and he therefore decided to ask his patron for leave to visit the court of Gaston de Foix at the foot of the Pyrenees, where he knew that he would meet knights from many lands who could give him the information he required.

It was thus that he set out, in 1388, with letters of recommendation from his patron Guy, taking with him four greyhounds to present to Gaston on his arrival. He was evidently aware of Gaston's liking for dogs, which is seen to this day by the Count's book on venery: *Les déduits de la chasse*, which deserves to be remembered, if only for its prologue.

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FROISSART AND GASTON DE FOIX.

[*face p.* 46.

A short analysis of this curious medieval apology for sport and exercise will throw some light on the personality of the chronicler's host, and will show at the same time that there was no lack of common sense (in spite of his many other defects) in the man whom Froissart praises as a model of knightly virtue. After an invocation to God and the Holy Virgin, Gaston states that he has always found pleasure in three things, in arms, love and the hunt; he will not speak of the first two, for there have been many better knights and many others have had greater fortune in love than he, so that it would be folly on his part to talk of such things; but in hunting he doubts if he has any master. He then expounds an apology for hunting. No man has better chances than the huntsman of avoiding those seven mortal sins, which so preoccupied the medieval mind, for the chief cause of sin is idleness: when a man is lazy and unoccupied and remains in bed or in his room his imagination dwells upon the pleasures of the flesh, and his thoughts turn to pride, avarice, anger, gluttony, lust and envy, but the good huntsman can have no such temptations, for he can never be idle, and so, having no evil imaginings, will do no evil works and will therefore "go straight to Paradise". Furthermore, he will be happier in this life than other people; as he is an early riser he sees the fine clear morning and he hears the song of the birds singing sweetly, melodiously and lovingly, each after its fashion, and he will see the sweet dew on the tender grass all brilliant in the light of the rising sun. Finally, if hunting is the best path to paradise it is also the best means of prolonging our sojourn on this earth: quoting Hippocrates the author declares that excess of meat kills more people than swords and

knives, so that the huntsman, who eats less and perspires continually, must live healthily and for many years. Thus he concludes that everyone who wishes to live a long, healthy and happy life and have salvation hereafter should become a huntsman and he will act wisely.

Froissart's description of his long journey to the Pyrenees is one of the most entertaining chapters of the Chronicles. At this stage of his career he seems to have realised that his own experiences and his own impressions might be of interest to his readers, and he now describes both with a familiarity of tone which we seldom meet elsewhere in his work. Possibly the vine-clad slopes and the wines of the South of France may have helped to loosen the tongue of this native of the flat and chilly North, for he writes to them a ballad which is one of the few passages in which he voices his responsiveness to the good things of nature :

Quand je vois vallées et monts,
Et vignes en chars et en treilles,
Je dis que le pays est bons,
Et si destoupe mes oreilles
Quant j'oc vin verser de bouteilles,
Car au boire prends grant plaisir.[1]

Passing through Carcassonne and leaving the road to Toulouse on his right he came to Pamiers, " a fine city, possessing an abundance of all good things, lying amidst vines, around which flows a fine river, clear and wide ".[2] He felt none too safe however as a solitary traveller, for the roads were then infested with brigands and even the inhabitants of the country would capture travellers and extort ransom from them, no matter to what nation they belonged. But, fortunately, after staying for three days at Pamiers he met

a knight belonging to the court of Gaston, Sir Espan de Leu, who was returning from Avignon. Froissart and he travelled together for ten days, and along the road, whilst the chronicler related the news from France, his companion described the places through which they passed and the part they had played in recent history. "He chatted the greater part of the day," says Froissart, "from the time he had said morning prayers." Every fortress, every castle that came in sight had figured in the crowded events of the preceding years, which were detailed to Froissart by his communicative guide. We have a delightful specimen of their dialogue, which seems to us so natural that we can scarcely realise that more than six centuries separate us from these two chatty travellers. It is the account of their arrival at Cazères on the third evening:

> Whilst the servants were preparing supper Sir Espan de Leu said: "Sir John, let us go to see the town". "Sir," said I, "I would gladly do so." Then we walked through the town. The knight showed me a part of the wall, and said to me, "Do you see that wall?" "Yes, Sir," I replied, "why do you ask me?" "Because" said the knight, "you see it is newer than the rest." "It is true", I answered. "Then", said he, "I will tell you how it happened and what took place there ten years ago."[1]

Sir Espan de Leu, like all others whom the chronicler interrogated, was doubtless not a little proud of the prospect that his words would be recorded, and was especially anxious to supply information which had not been obtained elsewhere. "There is Mauvoisin! Have you related in your history how the Duke of Anjou marched against Lourdes, laid siege to it and captured it, together with the castle of Trigalet which we see yonder on the river and which

belongs to the Seigneur de la Barre?" And the chronicler, having thought awhile, replied: "I believe indeed that I have heard nothing about it and I pray you relate the matter and I will gladly listen". At the same time he assured Sir Espan that his words would not be lost, for all would be chronicled in his history, provided God granted him a safe return to the county of Hainault and to the town of Valenciennes. So the chronicler, knowing that there is no "more accurate means of remembering than writing", on arriving at night at his inn, would enter up all the reports he had heard during the day.

Froissart was naturally interested to hear all that his companion could tell him about the character of the prince he was about to visit. He was not a little impressed by Sir Espan's account of the enormous wealth which the Count had amassed in order to assure his independence at a time when invaders, like the Black Prince, were looking round for further lands to conquer; doubtless too his hopes were raised when he heard that he might expect to find in Gaston a generous patron. Nor did Sir Espan forget to depict the lighter side of Gaston's character, and we can well understand that the chronicler found the journey all too short in listening to tales such as that of Ernaut d'Espagne, who, on a Christmas evening, when the Count was complaining of cold, sallied forth into the courtyard, seized a donkey laden with wood, and carrying it up a flight of twenty-four steps, hurled it, its legs in the air, together with its load, into the huge fireplace, to the great amusement of the Count and his assembled guests.

The two travellers arrived at Orthez on St. Catherine's Day, 1388, and the chronicler put up at the

Hostelry à la Lune. His reputation had already reached these distant parts, and the Count, on hearing of his arrival, forthwith sent for him, for no lord was ever more anxious than he to receive strangers and to hear news. Froissart was thenceforth attached to Gaston's household, where he remained for three months, and during this time he used to betake himself every night after supper (the Count supped at midnight) to the palace, in no matter what weather, in order to read his romance *Meliador* to his host :

> Such was the friendship between us : I had brought with me a book which I had composed at the request of my lord Wenceslas of Bohemia. And in the said book, which is called *Meliador*, are to be found the songs, ballades, roundels and virelais which the noble duke wrote during his lifetime, and these, with the book I had written, gave the Duke great pleasure, and I read to him every night after supper. Whilst I read none dared speak or utter a sound and he took great delight in listening. And when we came to a passage which he wished me to explain he was pleased to discuss it, not in the Gascon tongue, but in good fluent French.[1]

And when the reading was finished the Count would give the poet the remainder of his wine, which was poured out from a vessel of gold.

Froissart had seen many royal and other courts but he had seen none that pleased him more than that of Count Gaston. The suppers which he attended were a pageant in themselves. The Count entered escorted by a dozen lackeys bearing torches, and these torches were placed before his table during the repast, brilliantly illuminating the hall, which was crowded with knights and squires. The Count was fond of minstrels, and during the two hours he spent at table he made his clerks sing songs, ballades and roundels, varying their programme with strange *entremets* which

he afterwards sent to other tables to amuse the assembled company. The chronicler, who fully enjoyed this "paradise on earth", also realised the advantages it offered for the conscientious historian, and lost no opportunity in turning it to good account :

> In the hall and throughout the palace knights and squires of honour could be seen going to and fro, talking of arms and love. . . . One could here learn news from every country. I was there informed of the wars that had been waged in Spain, Portugal, Aragon, England and Scotland, and in the Languedoc, for during the time I was at the court of the Count I saw knights from every land and I learnt from them, or from the Count himself, who willingly talked to me of these matters.[1]

On St. Nicholas Day there were special solemnities at Orthez ; Gaston, accompanied by the clergy and the inhabitants, proceeded through the town to the church chanting the psalm, which was so appropriate to the times : *Benedictus Dominus meus, qui docet manus meas ad proelium et digitos meos ad bellum*, and at divine service there was a large choir of good singers and a most melodious organ, so that the chronicler was reminded of Easter or Christmas celebrations at the chapel of the Pope or of the King of France. Similar celebrations were held at Christmas, when the company included four bishops, two Clementists and two Urbanists and the flower of chivalry from neighbouring countries. One of the guests was a squire named Bascot de Mauléon, who put up at Froissart's inn. Froissart, noting that he had a large number of pack animals and that he was served in silver plate, guessed that he was a person of some importance and made his acquaintance ; in the evening squire and chronicler talked by the fireside whilst awaiting the Count's supper hour, and another biography was thus added

to the Chronicles, so typical of that of scores of intrepid adventurers during the Hundred Years' War: one day poor, without even a horse to ride upon, and the next day owner of a castle worth one hundred thousand francs, captured by a simple ruse. The squire had scarcely finished his story when the watch was heard sounding the assembly for supper, and all set out with torches for the castle.

Amongst the knights whom Froissart met at Gaston's court there were many who had taken part in the Spanish campaigns, and it was from them that he obtained the information which forms the principal substance of his third book: Lancaster's landing at Corunna, and his advance through Galicia and Castille, in conjunction with his ally, the King of Portugal. He seems moreover to have taken special pains to discover the causes of the failure of the campaign, which he attributes mainly to the climate; for the English, who were accustomed to fresh food and good rich ale, had nothing but strong wines of which they drank freely to forget their troubles, and as they slept at night with no covering owing to the heat, they were caught by the cold in the early morning which chilled them and gave them fever. Some of the chronicler's informants also criticised the Duke's action in taking his wife and daughters with him, for after one day's march the women wished to rest fifteen days, and the consequent delay enabled the enemy to strengthen his fortresses and defend the passes and rivers. It was doubtless from the French who had fought on the side of the Spaniards that he collected his pithy remarks about the collapse of the campaign, informing us how, when John of Gaunt lay sick at Santiago, he received reports of what the

world was thinking of his attempts to win Castille, and how pilgrims brought him scornful messages from the French, asking him if they, the French, knew how to make war, and if they had fought to his liking: "The English used to say that we can dance and sing better than make war. Times have now changed; they may dance and we will protect our frontiers in such a way that we shall suffer no loss".

It was during Froissart's stay at Orthez that the marriage was arranged between the Duke of Berry, the King's uncle, and Gaston's ward, Jeanne de Boulogne, which was so freely commented upon at court owing to the difference of age between the couple; even Charles VI had tried to convince his uncle of his folly in marrying a bride of twelve years old, who was a better match for his son than for a father of sixty. Gaston had not failed to take full advantage of the Duke's impatience and had demanded a large sum before handing over the bride. When the transaction was finally concluded Froissart decided to accompany the bridal procession to France. So he took leave of the host who had shown him such warm hospitality and received as a parting gift from the Count a purse of eighty gold florins. Gaston also invited him to return, which Froissart would gladly have done, for he tells us that three years later he was already on his way to pay a second visit to Orthez when he received news of the death of the Count.

The bridal procession, consisting of sumptuous chariots, "too marvellous to describe", which the infatuated Duke had sent for his bride, and accompanied by five hundred horse, travelled through Toulouse to Avignon, and when it crossed the Rhone (25th May, 1389) the cardinals came out to escort the

bride, who was riding a white palfrey given her by the Pope. The Princess and her suite were entertained at the palace in a manner worthy of the glories of Avignon, for her stay, Froissart tells us, cost the Pope twenty thousand francs. It was at Avignon that a sad misadventure befell the chronicler, if we are to believe the story related in the *Dit du Florin*. The eighty florins which he had received from the Count he intended to entrust to a money changer, but in the meantime he left them in his purse on Sunday when he attended mass, and on his return he found that the purse had been emptied of its contents, and he could find no one who could give him news of his missing fortune. As usual, he has no difficulty in consoling himself, for he knows that what is easily gained is easily lost, and he makes this mishap the occasion for a fresh appeal to his patrons : besides the good Lord de la Rivière, the good Count of Sancerre and the Dauphin d'Auvergne, on whose assistance, he thinks, he may count, he feels that he has a special claim upon my Lord of Coucy, for it was he who proposed him for the canonry of Lille, which so far had not materialised, though the negotiations had cost the poet a hundred florins. Such is the story of the lost purse which has established itself in Froissart's biography ; it is so admirably told that it seems a pity to throw doubt upon the poet's veracity. But he tells us elsewhere that Jeanne de Boulogne, whom he was accompanying, was at Avignon only from Tuesday to Friday, and as the purse is stated to have been stolen on Sunday there is some reason to suspect him of inventing the motive he gives for appealing for more presents. As for the canonry of Lille, Froissart's doubts concerning his prospects were fully

justified. He was never elected in spite of the Pope's promise, to which he alludes, that the election was to take place the following year. The only further reference that we have to his candidature is the ironical designation which he assumes in the prologue of the Fourth Book, in which he styles himself *grass* canon of Lille—the grass having never ripened into corn.

During his stay in Avignon the chronicler naturally visited the famous tomb of Cardinal Pierre de Luxembourg in the Chapel of St. Michael, for the example of the Cardinal's life and the miracles performed at his tomb after his death were the common talk of the day, and " kings, dukes, counts, ladies and people of all conditions " brought their gifts to the chapel. It is interesting to hear a contemporary's account of the life of this pious man, which stands out with such marked relief in church history of the fourteenth century :

> I tell you that this holy cardinal was in his time a man of good, holy, noble and devout life and he performed many works pleasing to God. He was gentle, courteous and kind, chaste, and a generous giver of alms. He gave all to the poor, and kept nothing of church revenues except to maintain his station. The greater part of the day and night he spent in prayer. He shunned the vanities and luxuries and pomps of this world, and merited so well of God that He called him to His company at an early age, and he ordered his burial in the common sepulchre of poor people; and in all his life there was nothing but humility; and he lies there and was put in the chapel of St. Michael.[1]

The chronicler proceeded from Avignon to Riom in Auvergne, where he witnessed the marriage between the Duke of Berry and Jeanne de Boulogne, and composed for the occasion his ballade with the refrain :

Pour le pastourel de Berry
Et la pastoure de Boulogne.

He then continued his travels. He was for three days at the castle of Crèvecoeur, near Cambray, with Enguerrand de Coucy, the same knight who had made himself so popular by his singing some thirty years earlier, when a prisoner in England, and for one month with his patron Guy de Blois in Holland. Subsequently he returned to France to collect information concerning the treaty between the French and English which was being discussed at Leulinghem, and he also desired to witness Queen Isabella's state entry into Paris on the 22nd of August. He had special reasons for being interested in this latter event. He had related in his Second Book the negotiations which had resulted in the marriage of Charles VI and the Bavarian princess. They had been managed by his patron the Duchess of Brabant and by the Duchess of Hainault, who had initiated the thirteen-year-old bride to the niceties of French manners and had fitted her out with raiment more becoming the Queen of France than her simple Bavarian garments. There had been an element of romance, too, in the event, for Charles had chosen her for her beauty and had been so impatient in awaiting the marriage that his uncle the Duke of Burgundy had been obliged to hasten the proceedings so as to put an end to his "malady".[1]

Froissart, who had witnessed so many pageants, had seen none equalling the Queen's entry in costliness and ingenuity. "I, the author of this book, who was present at all these things," he says, "when I saw such great numbers of them, I marvelled whence they all came." Paris was so crowded that the whole

world appeared to be there, and the sergeants-at-arms and king's officers had no light task in making way for the procession. The main streets from the Porte Saint Denis to the Bridge of Notre-Dame were adorned with rich hangings depicting various themes; at the entrance to the town was a starry heaven with angels and an image of the Holy Virgin and an infant holding a small mill; then came a platform, at the church of the Holy Trinity, with a number of knights rehearsing a battle scene between Richard and the Saracens; finally, at a second gate, was another representation of heaven, in which were choir-boys dressed as angels, singing sweetly, and as the Queen passed beneath they descended from Paradise and placed a rich crown on her head, with the words:

> Dame enclose entre fleurs de lis,
> Reine estes vous de Paris,
> De France et de tout le pays;
> Nous en ralons en Paradis.[1]

Whilst Charles VI, after this fête, continued his revelling in a tour of the South of France, Froissart returned to Valenciennes to write up the results of his travels. But in order to be certain that the account of the Spanish wars which he had heard at the court of Gaston was "true and authentic", he decided to hear the Portuguese version of the same events. After having "refreshed himself" for some time at Valenciennes he set out therefore for Bruges and was there told that he would find at Middelbourg in Zeeland a Portuguese knight, a valiant and wise man, who had just arrived, and would be able to describe these wars, as he had taken part in them. So Froissart set out for Middelbourg, accompanied by a Portuguese friend, and was introduced to the knight,

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QUEEN ISABELLA'S ENTRY INTO PARIS.

The Queen is about to pass under the Gate of St. Denis. The figure of the Virgin and Child can be seen above the gate. In the background are the Bastille, the Châtelet, and Notre Dame. On the left Froissart writing his chronicle.

[*face p.* 58.

Don Juan Fernandez Pasteco. He remained for six days in the company of his informant, who talked so willingly, so deliberately and in such well-ordered fashion, he says, "that it was a great pleasure to me to listen and make my notes".[1]

V

FROISSART'S LAST VISIT TO ENGLAND

Froissart had scarcely finished recording the wars in Spain and Portugal, with the help of the notes obtained from Don Juan Fernandez Pasteco, when his interest was once again directed to French affairs, which were then " dark and troubled, and likely to lead to great evil ". It is thus that he describes the conflict between the King's uncles, the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry, and the marmousets, as the ministers of the late King Charles the Wise were called. For four years, since the failure of the fantastic scheme for the invasion of Britain, these ministers, of whom the chief were Olivier de Clisson and La Rivière, had exercised control of affairs, and the princes' power had been so far diminished that the Duke of Berry was unable to save his unscrupulous treasurer Betisac from trial and execution for his extortions in the Languedoc. Froissart was in Paris in June of 1392 when Olivier de Clisson, on his return from a banquet, was assailed by Pierre de Craon and a band of brigands and left for dead.[1] It must have required considerable courage on the part of a contemporary to relate this incident, as it was difficult for the chronicler not to reveal his own suspicions. It is evident at whose door he lays the guilt when he hints at a deeply-laid scheme contrived by traitors to bring about confusion in the realm, and reports the popular rumour that the Duke

of Berry might well have prevented the murderous act, if he had wished. Similarly, when he relates how Charles VI set out to punish the Duke of Brittany for refusing to deliver up Pierre de Craon he makes no attempt to veil the efforts made by the King's uncles to hinder the expedition. It is obvious that he was no blind partisan of the cause of Burgundy, as has been suggested.[1] His sympathy in this affair is entirely for Olivier de Clisson and La Rivière, whom he describes as "a valiant man and a good knight, who had laboured for the honour of the kingdom of France", and he evidently believed himself in the absurdity of the accusation that they were responsible for the King's illness: "Now consider, you who understand reason, how that could be, for they were the people who had most to lose by the King's illness". The Duchess of Berry, who pleaded their innocence, was a "valiant lady", whilst the Duchess of Burgundy, who desired their end, was "cruel and proud", and the Duke himself, in not following immediately his wife's wishes, was only dissembling, from fear of losing the good grace of the kingdom.[2]

The other important question which attracted the attention of the chronicler at this time was that of the peace proposals which were being discussed between France and England. The first meeting of representatives had been held at Amiens in 1391, when the demands of the two nations had been put forward and had been found to be irreconcilable. The French insisted upon the destruction of Calais, but this proposal the English would not for a moment entertain, as the commons of England considered Calais the most precious town in the world, and said that so long as it

belonged to them they held the keys of France at their belt. The chronicler thinks that some explanation is necessary on this point, for the sake of readers "who would not believe" that the opinion of the commons held such weight in England:

> For so it is, that all the commons of England favour war more than peace; for in the time of good King Edward, of good memory, and of his son, the Prince of Wales, they won so many great and fine victories over the French, and enjoyed so many conquests, ransoms and redemptions of towns and castles that the poor had become rich, and those who were not noble by birth had won titles of nobility by their bold and valiant adventures, their great conquests and their gold and silver; and the men of the next generation wished to continue this life, although since the time of King Edward and his son, the Prince of Wales, by the valour and enterprise of my lord Bertrand Duguesclin and many other good French knights, as already related in this history, the English had been driven back and repulsed.[1]

When the negotiations were resumed at Leulinghem in 1393 we find Froissart at Abbeville, interrogating the envoys. England was represented by the Dukes of Lancaster and Gloucester, and France by the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry, whilst Charles VI himself was close at hand at Abbeville, where the chronicler doubtless saw him frequently taking his recreation in the gardens which gave him such great pleasure. The chronicler, in spite of all his influence, was unable to learn the exact terms of the treaty, but he was informed of the general trend of the discussion and particularly of the difficulty experienced by the English in following the proceedings in French. Until the beginning of the fourteenth century French had been almost a common language for both countries, but by this time it had become a foreign tongue for the English. All propositions therefore were made in

writing at the conference, for the English were afraid of the many subtleties and words of double meaning in the French language, which they suspected the French of turning to their own advantage. All that the English dukes could not understand they caused to be cancelled in their presence, giving as an excuse that the French they had learned in England was not the same as that used by the French dukes in their writing and speech. The Duke of Gloucester especially resisted to the last in his fear of the "cavillations and deceptions" of the coloured and involved language of the French.[1] We are not far from the time when Philippe de Commines, on seeing a letter from England written in correct French, could say that it was easy to see that it had been written by a Frenchman and not by an Englishman.

We have another sidelight on the peace negotiations of Leulinghem when Froissart relates how he met, by one of those chance encounters in which he seems to have been so extremely fortunate, the herald who was dispatched in a fishing boat from Calais to announce to Richard the conclusion of peace, and learnt with what satisfaction the King received the news:

> As soon as he arrived he was taken to the King's room, because he came from Calais and from the two dukes who had made the treaty. And he gave the letters to the King, who opened them and read them and great was his joy at what he found within; and for the good news which the herald had brought he gave him gifts of great value, as the said herald, named king Mark, told me afterwards at leisure, as I rode with him in the kingdom of England.[2]

An interesting document, dated 13th June, 1393,[3] reminds us that Froissart, whilst investigating and reporting these peace conferences, still found time for compositions of a lighter vein. It states that the

bailiff's lieutenant at Abbeville had received from Sir John Froissart, priest and canon of Chimay, an acknowledgment of the gift of twenty gold francs presented him by the Duke of Orleans for a poem entitled *le Dit Royal*. We have no traces of this poem to-day, but we are glad to know that it won the approval of one of the greatest connoisseurs of poetry of the age, Louis d'Orleans, patron of Eustache Deschamps and of Christine de Pisan, and father of the still more famous poet Charles d'Orleans.

In the meanwhile evil times had befallen Froissart's other patron, Guy de Blois. We no longer read of him in the glowing terms used by the chronicler in his earlier work; we are told that he and his wife had become inordinately stout through excessive indulgence in rich food and drink and that the Count could no longer ride on horseback. Then came the temptation of realising money on his estate, for he had no longer any heir, as his son had died a few months after his marriage with the daughter of the Duke of Berry. The offer came from the King's brother, the Duke of Touraine, and afterwards Duke of Orleans, who, thanks to his marriage with Valentine of Milan, had more florins than he knew how to make use of. On first hearing of the proposal Guy de Blois had exclaimed that so long as he had plate or bowl which he could sell or pledge he would never think of selling his inheritance, "to the damnation of his soul". But the Countess was less able to resist the offer of wealth, and the lackey Sohier, who was the son of a weaver, with no schooling or letters, had fewer scruples still, and it was he who carried most weight in his master's counsels. So the "poor bargain" was concluded and we hear little more of

the "noble prince" and the chronicler's "sovereign master and lord".[1]

Now that there was at last peace between England and France Froissart saw that the opportunity had come to satisfy a wish which he had long cherished, that of seeing England again. Several reasons, he said, prompted him to make this journey. "The first was that in my youth I had lived in the Court and Household of the noble King Edward, of good memory, and of the noble Queen Philippa, his wife, and amongst their children and barons of England; for I had found in them all honour, love, generosity and courtesy. I desired therefore to see the country, and it seemed to me that if I saw it I should live the longer; during twenty-seven years indeed I had desired to return there. And although I might not find the lords whom I had seen and left at my departure, I should see their heirs, which would give me great pleasure."[2] Above all Froissart wished to meet King Richard, son of the noble Black Prince, whom he had not seen since the Christening at Bordeaux, when the Prince was preparing for his expedition to Spain.

Froissart spoke of his project to his patrons, Albert of Bavaria, William of Hainault, his most cherished and honoured lady, Jeanne, Duchess of Brabant and Luxembourg, his dear lord Enguerrand de Coucy, and to the gentle knight, de Gommegnies, whom he had known in his youth in England, and he received from them letters of recommendation to King Richard and his uncles. He had also prepared a present for the King, a collection of his poems which he had had richly illuminated and bound in velvet.

He crossed from Calais to Dover on the 12th July, 1395. Already in Dover he was disappointed to find

that all the houses were occupied by people whom he no longer knew. "When I came there I found no man of my knowledge, it was so long since I had been to England, and the houses were all newly changed and young children had become men, and the women knew me not, nor I them." From Dover he went to Canterbury to visit the shrine of St. Thomas and the tomb of the Black Prince, and he there learnt that Richard, who had just returned from his expedition to Ireland, was expected to arrive the following day. When the King came, with a great company of lords, ladies and damsels, Froissart found to his dismay that he knew no one in the party. He was disappointed especially in not finding his old friend, Richard Stury, whom he had known formerly at the court of Edward III; with a sad heart he asked if he was still living, and was told that he was in London.[1]

Froissart then found the seneschal, Sir Thomas Percy, who offered to present him to the King, but as preparations were being made for leaving, he was advised to follow the party which was proceeding to the castle of Leeds in Kent. During the journey the chronicler talked with an English knight, who, seeing that he was a stranger, and taking him for a Frenchman, as people usually do, says Froissart, when a man speaks French, engaged him in conversation. Froissart, hearing that the knight had been with the King to Ireland, was curious to know the truth about St. Patrick's cave, which was reported to reveal to pilgrims a first glimpse of purgatory, and by the time the Englishman had finished his account of a night he himself had spent there, the party had already reached Leeds.

Froissart here made himself known to the Duke of

York, who well remembered him and assured him that he would be treated with all love and courtesy, "for the sake of past times, and for the love of the lady our mother, in whose service you were". It was the Duke who presented him to the King, and Richard received him "joyously and kindly", and read at great leisure the letters of introduction, whereupon he assured the chronicler that he was welcome at court, seeing that he had belonged to the Household of his father Edward. But it was not on this occasion that the chronicler presented his book, as he had been warned that Richard was then much occupied with the negotiations for his marriage with Isabella of France and the petitions of Gascon lords protesting against the gift of Aquitaine to the Duke of Lancaster.

Froissart heard of all these matters from Sir William Lysle and Sir John of Grailly as they followed the King from Leeds to Eltham. It was here that he found Sir Richard Stury, whom he had last seen twenty-four years earlier at Brussels. Sir Richard made him "good cheer", and the two talked together as they walked up and down in a gallery before the King's chamber.[1] When the deliberations were finished Sir Richard spoke of Froissart to the King, who expressed a desire to see the book the chronicler had brought with him. Froissart with much pride relates:

> I saw him in his chamber and placed the book on his bed. He opened it and looked at it with much pleasure, and well he might, for it was handsomely written and illuminated and bound in crimson velvet with ten silver studs and gilt roses in the middle, and it had two large gilt clasps richly wrought. Then the king asked me what the book treated of. And I said to him, "Of Love". He was greatly pleased with this answer, and he perused the book, for he

> spoke and read French well, and then gave orders to one of his knights to take it to his oratory, and was wondrously gracious and kind to me.[1]

On leaving the King's chamber Froissart met a knight, Henry Chrystead, who had taken part in the recent Irish campaign. This was a favourable opportunity to learn something of the Irish, who so far had not figured in the Chronicles. The knight related how he had been chosen to educate the four Irish kings before they were knighted by Richard, and described the difficulties he had encountered in inducing them to wear breeches and to adopt civilised table manners. What surprised the chronicler more than anything else was that Richard had been so successful in his conquest of the country, whereas the great Edward had failed. He knew moreover that his patrons at home, who were all interested in military matters, would desire to know the cause of Richard's success :

> When I return to the county of Hainault and speak of this matter, know that I shall be examined and questioned, for our lords, Duke Albert of Bavaria and his son William call themselves lords of Frisia, a great and powerful kingdom, for they consider they have right to it as did their predecessors ; but the Frisians will accept no manner of reasoning and will subject themselves to no one.[2]

Froissart, having heard the explanation, noted all that had been told him so that on his return to his own country he could write and chronicle the conquest of Ireland and thus add another chapter to his already voluminous history.

The chronicler spent three months in England, revisiting many of the places with which he was familiar, Leeds, Kingston, Eltham and Windsor. When he finally took leave of Richard at Windsor,

the King presented him with a silver-gilt goblet containing one hundred nobles, which made him, he says, a richer man for the rest of his life.

We know practically nothing of Froissart after his return to Hainault, except that he continued his writing for several more years. He composed his Fourth and last Book of Chronicles, a passage of which shows that he outlived his patron Albert of Bavaria, who died in 1404. On the other hand it seems improbable that he lived till 1419, as some have thought,[1] otherwise he would certainly have made some reference to Henry V's invasion of France. Tradition maintains that he was buried in the church of Chimay, but his tomb has never been discovered.

But although actual facts are wanting, we can form some idea of the chronicler's last years from the general tone of his writings. His Fourth Book finishes with an account of the death of Richard II. Although he was fully aware of the weakness of Richard's rule, it was with difficulty, he says, that he could bring himself to record his death. After recalling his many associations with the late King, with his parents and grandparents, he exclaims: "Most bound am I to pray for him, and it is with regret that I have written of his death, but as I have composed this history to the best of my power, I have recorded it that men might know what things have happened". In his description of the funeral procession through the streets of London we have the last echo of his dominant theme, the instability of human affairs, for who could have prophesied such an end for a king who had ruled over England for twenty years? "Now consider, lords, dukes, counts,

prelates, and all men of lineage and power, how wondrous and strange are the fortunes of this world!"[1]

But it is especially when we read the revision of the First Book, which was probably Froissart's last work, that we realise how deeply the death of Richard and the general trend of events at the end of the century had affected his outlook. In this earlier work he had been concerned mainly with the fortunes of the nobles, and he scarcely mentioned the people. But the history of England in the second half of the century and the insurrections in France and Flanders had opened his eyes to the importance of the commons. He observes now, in his last version, that many of the events which he had recorded formerly in his youth, had a deeper significance than he had imagined; they were due to what he calls the ambitious and overbearing nature of the English people. Already in his opening chapters, describing the deposition of Edward II, he can remind his readers that the King was dethroned and brought to an untimely end because his people were presumptuous enough to disapprove of him. The commons of England, he tells us, are cruel, overbearing and unloyal and the nobles who are loyal are powerless against them; a king who governs them must submit to their wishes; if he does not and his affairs turn out badly, evil will befall him as in the case of Edward.

It is not surprising that the word "mutation" falls so often from Froissart's pen in his later writings. When he had started out to write for the benefit of the young noble desirous of winning glory he had thought the world a brilliant arena where the foremost actors were its richly caparisoned knights.

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FUNERAL PROCESSION OF RICHARD II LEAVING THE TOWER OF LONDON.

[*face p.* 70.

Little had he dreamt that before finishing his Chronicle he would be brought to record the rise of a new social order where there was little place for those medieval chivalrous ideals to which his long and active life had been pledged.

VI

FROISSART'S HERITAGE

Froissart often informs us that the lords and ladies of the courts he frequented were interested above all in two themes, Arms and Love, and he himself asserts :

> Toute joie et tout honour
> Viennent d'armes et d'amour.

In a general sense it is these two themes that inspire all his writings, since the Chronicles record the deeds of prowess of contemporary wars whilst the *Poésies* treat of Love. We know that even had there been no Hundred Years' War he would still have written of jousts, tournaments and chivalrous exploits. His romance, *Meliador*, the last of the Arthurian cycle of poems, "a veritable anachronism", according to Gaston Paris, shows that if contemporary events had not furnished him with matter for his work, he would have invented it. Instead of writing chronicles for the court of Queen Philippa, he would then have written romances, just as Chrestien de Troyes, two centuries earlier, had composed romances for the court of Marie de Champagne.

Amongst earlier writers in fact, it is to Chrestien, who first formulated in Romance the chivalrous ideals of French aristocracy, that Froissart is most indebted. Chrestien wrote for a public that had grown tired of the older epic songs of France, which had

been written for men bent upon war and religion, with no time and understanding for the art of love. The heroine, if any, was but a pale figure who commanded little respect from the warrior. But at the court of Chrestien's patron, Marie de Champagne, life had grown more refined, and in this new social world woman was predominant. The knight henceforth was the serving man and his highest ambition was to win his lady's favour. Courtesy, gallantry, and the ennobling influence of courtly love became the chief themes of the poet, and when Chrestien, in a series of masterpieces, *Eric et Enide*, *Yvain*, *Lancelot*, poured them into a Celtic mould, the court of King Arthur came to be regarded as the Golden Age of Chivalry.

Although Froissart wrote nearly two centuries later he still adhered to the same ideals. Whenever he sets a high standard of excellence in gallantry or beauty it is to King Arthur and his knights that he refers his readers. For Froissart Edward III was the second King Arthur; his Queen, Philippa, the greatest queen who had reigned in England since Queen Guinevere; the courts of England and France he represents as vying with the splendour of Arthur's court, and when the Order of the Garter was founded it was in the same castle of Windsor where King Arthur had formerly established his Round Table, the home of so many valiant knights who had won fame throughout the world as warriors and lovers. So Perceval, Tristan, Yvain, Gawain, Guinevere have all their place in Froissart's paradise of lovers.

Naturally the Chronicles and Poems, in these circumstances, have much in common; but history and poetry, which were scarcely distinguishable three

centuries earlier in the Chanson de Geste, had now definitely become dissociated, and Froissart as poet and chronicler had to take his place in two different successions of writers. In the beginning of the thirteenth century authors of histories had begun to recognise that accuracy of statement was difficult to reconcile with the demands of rhythm and rime, and the practice of writing history in prose spread all the more rapidly when soldiers began to write their memoirs. Many of these early chronicles refer to the Crusades, which provided an abundance of material no less thrilling to the public of those days than the wars of Charlemagne, which had formed the principal subject of the Chansons de Geste. Villehardouin, at the beginning of the thirteenth century related the history of the Fourth Crusade, of which he was one of the leaders, and a century later Joinville narrated the history of St. Louis's expedition to Egypt and Syria. Both these works were masterpieces and were written in prose, and there could henceforth be no doubt that prose was the superior medium for the writing of history.

Villehardouin and Joinville had both recorded events of which they themselves were spectators, but with the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War, which gave a fresh impetus to the writing of history, the chronicler's task assumed different dimensions. He was now obliged to follow simultaneous campaigns in many theatres, in the North and South of France, in Scotland and in Brittany. He could therefore no longer be personally acquainted with anything but a small section of passing events, and for the rest he had to rely on the testimony of others.

The task of recording the earlier events of these wars

was first achieved by Jehan le Bel, Canon of Liège, who, as we have seen, was closely associated with John of Hainault, one of the most important figures at the outbreak of the campaign. Jehan le Bel is frequently mentioned by Froissart, who refers to him as his authority for the first part of the Chronicles, but even so, as nothing was known of Jehan le Bel's work, the younger writer's indebtedness was almost completely overlooked until the middle of last century, when Jehan le Bel's *Vrayes Chroniques* were discovered.[1] It was then found on comparing the two writers that Froissart's debt to his predecessor was greater than had even been imagined, and that many of the early chapters in the Chronicles were copied literally from the older work. In these circumstances some knowledge of Jehan le Bel and his writings is essential for the understanding of Froissart's own development.

A paragraph from a contemporary biographer, added to the details given by Froissart, throws a few sidelights on the life of the Canon. He would have been a worthy figure amongst the Canterbury pilgrims and might well have served as Chaucer's model for his monk. He was a tall and stately man of great personality. He dressed as a knight and was always richly clad in ermine and silks and arrayed in pearls and precious stones, varying his raiment according to the season. In his youth he practised arms and took part in tournaments, and kept dogs and birds for hunting and hawking. He had an imposing retinue, as large as that of a bishop, and on feast days forty or fifty followers would dine at his table. Moreover his squires of honour would invite of their own accord any worthy stranger, whether prelate, knight or squire, to

dine with their master, and no prince could come to Liège without dining with him. Froissart comments particularly on his wealth, saying that he could well spare the money spent on his historical researches. Finally we are told that he lived to the age of eighty or more and when he died he left large possessions to his twin sons born him by a damsel of good extraction.[1] It has been thought that one of these sons was the father of another Jehan le Bel, who was afterwards to compose a history of the deposition of Richard II.

Like his contemporary Guillaume de Machaut, who was also a prelate, Jehan le Bel combined with his ecclesiastical duties the writing of poetry, but none of the songs and virelais which he composed have been handed down to us. His *Vrayes Chroniques* were the outcome of his friendship with John of Hainault, whom he accompanied to England for the Scottish campaign of Edward III in 1327. He had thus a close personal knowledge of the events he recorded, for he was not only familiar with English affairs but was also brought into contact with the French, when John of Hainault left the English to join King Philip just before the battle of Cressy.

Froissart, on the other hand, when he started to write his history, was too young, as he himself reminds us, to record the events which took place before the battle of Poitiers in 1356, and his first work, that presented to Queen Philippa, dealt mainly with the wars from Poitiers onwards. When, subsequently, at the request of Robert of Namur, he decided to extend his field, starting with events leading up to the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War, he seems to have done little more, for these early years,

than incorporate in his own history the chronicle of John le Bel.

It is thus that we owe to Jehan le Bel many of the most famous pages relating to the first half of the century. One of the most striking examples of Froissart's indebtedness, for instance, is the account of Edward's first campaign in Scotland.[1] Jehan le Bel had good reason to remember this expedition, for it had almost cost him his life in a quarrel between the archers of Lincoln and Edward's allies, the men of Hainault, whilst the army was encamped at York. The quarrel, moreover, had brought about much bitterness of feeling, with the result that the small Hainault forces had been obliged to keep double watch at night to protect themselves from the English as well as from the Scots. In addition to this, the difficulties of the expedition increased as the army moved northwards; the Scots constantly refused to give battle so that the English and their allies spent many weary days marching backwards and forwards amongst the hills and marshes of Northumberland; their baggage and stores had all been left behind, owing to the difficult nature of the country, and when Edward finally abandoned the pursuit his army was reduced to a state of famine and his soldiers were fighting each other for food, his horses were shoeless and covered with sores and all saddlery and harness were rotted by the constant rains. Possibly if Jehan le Bel had been more accustomed to this kind of campaigning he would hardly have troubled to detail these hardships in his chronicles, but we have seen that he was used to a life of luxury and comfort, and we can well imagine what he must have suffered in this borderland expedition, and why he noted such details as the price

of bread and wine, and the lack of sticks to make fires, which would never have impressed themselves upon another campaigner.

Jehan le Bel was impressed also by another aspect of this expedition; he had seen Edward's splendid army completely baffled and reduced to a state of misery by the Scot, and this brought him to reflect upon Scottish methods of warfare. Hence the famous passage which gives us such a vivid picture of the customs of the Scots in the fourteenth century:

> The Scots are a hardy race of great endurance in arms and in war. And at this time, as at present, they had little esteem for the English. And when they wish to invade England they march twenty to twenty-four leagues by day as by night, to the great wonder of many people who are ignorant of their customs. . . . When they march into England they are all mounted except the camp followers who are on foot. Knights and squires are mounted on good stout horses and the commons on small hackneys. And they have no baggage on account of the mountainous country through which they have to pass and which is called Northumberland. They have no stores of bread and wine for they content themselves, when campaigning, with half cooked flesh and water from the rivers. And they have no cauldrons, for they cook their meat in the skins of the beasts, and they know that they will find great numbers of animals in the country they are invading. Each carries at the saddle a large flat stone and a bag of meal and when they are satiated with badly cooked meat they throw the stone into the fire and moisten some of their meal, and when the stone is hot they spread on it some of their paste and make a kind of cake which they eat to comfort their stomachs. It is not surprising therefore if they are able to march for longer distances than other people, seeing that all are mounted and that they have no baggage or stores except such as you have heard.[1]

Froissart copied this passage and the general description of the campaign from the work of his predecessor, and even on revising his Chronicle, when he generally treated his model with less respect, he

made no changes in this section, except that he adds that during his visit to Scotland he was well able to study the habits and the customs of the Scots, and that he found them just as they were described.

Another passage, equally famous, which we owe to the pen of Jehan le Bel and not to Froissart, is that relating the death of Robert Bruce and the King's heroic request that James Douglas should take his heart to the Holy Sepulchre, and so acquit him of a vow made in earlier years that he would proceed overseas to fight the enemies of Christ.[1] Jehan le Bel had probably heard of this episode from James Douglas himself when he proceeded to Flanders to obtain help for his Crusade, for many knights, the chronicler tells us, visited him on board his vessel and were richly entertained at table with gold and silver plate and various species of wines. But whatever Jehan le Bel's source, Froissart has nothing to add to his original, except that in his revised version he supplies a detail, doubtlessly from his own imagination, with a view to increasing the dramatic effect of the story. When the heart was removed from the body, he says, it was placed in a richly wrought casket, and at the funeral at Dunfermline Douglas attached this casket to his neck, and in the presence of the barons, prelates and knights of Scotland, vowed that he would never part from it day or night until he had carried it beyond the seas to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.[2]

But even such notable borrowings as these are probably not the most important aspect of Jehan le Bel's influence on the younger writer. There is no occasion of course to trace to Jehan le Bel those aristocratic and chivalrous ideals which inspire Froissart as

well as his model, for, as we have seen, they are to be found already in the imagination of the schoolboy of Valenciennes, who in later life recalls the impression produced in him by the stories of minstrels and by the romances which he read during the winter months. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Froissart derived very largely his methods and principles as a historian from the writer whose work he incorporated in his own. His conception of the dignity of the historian's task and of the obligation to keep " as near to the truth as possible " is found already in Jehan le Bel, who had also set an example by admitting his ignorance when in doubt of a matter.[1] Jehan le Bel had likewise given an example of personal sacrifice, for Froissart himself says of his predecessor that he spared no pains and expense in his quest for information. Finally, it appears from Froissart's description of his first chronicle, that presented to Queen Philippa, that this was written in verse, like many other historical works of the age, and there is good reason to assume that when he adopted prose as his medium he was influenced by the opinion of Jehan le Bel, who definitely condemns verse for the writing of history : " Rime ", he says, " demands too many embellishments and repetitions ; the poet relates many deeds of valour so wonderful that they appear hardly credible and almost impossible. . . History therefore written in verse, would be displeasing to people of reason and understanding." At any rate, Froissart was so impressed by this opinion that he makes definite allusion to it in his account of the wars in Brittany : " Many minstrels and singers in public places relating fabulous poems concerning the wars in Brittany have corrupted the true story concerning

these events, thereby greatly displeasing Monseigneur Jehan le Bel, who started to write this history in prose, and me, Jean Froissart, who continued it as accurately and as impartially as I was able, for their rimes and their songs give by no means the true story".[1]

Froissart's inheritance was thus unusually great. Just as he received from the older court poets and the *Roman de la Rose* the themes of most of his poems and from Guillaume de Machaut the metre in which they were cast, so too, in writing history, he had already in Jehan le Bel a model which furnished him not only with much of his matter but also with the principles which were to guide him in his work.

When full allowance however is made for Froissart's debt to Jehan le Bel, we have still no difficulty in explaining why the younger writer's reputation completely eclipsed that of his predecessor, so that whereas le Bel's chronicles lay hidden and ignored for several centuries, Froissart's works were copied and re-copied in scores of manuscripts. A comparison of the two texts shows that even in his early writings Froissart was often able to surpass his model. If we take, for instance, the well-known passage describing the flight of the French King after the battle of Cressy, we find that the original account in Jehan le Bel reads as follows:

> So the King was obliged to withdraw, and his men led him away in great sorrow and against his will . . . . and made him ride until they came to La Broye. There the King rested, very dejected, and the following day he went to Amiens to await the remains of his army.[2]

Froissart, on the other hand, develops this outline of events in dramatic manner by describing the King's arrival in the depths of night before the castle, at the

door of which he was obliged to knock for some time in unkingly fashion before awaking the inmates :

> So the King rode on full of grief and lament for his army as far as the castle of La Broye. When he came to the door he found it shut and the drawbridge raised, for it was late at night and the darkness was black and thick. Then the King called for the chatelain, for he wished to enter. And the chatelain was roused and came to the watch-tower and asked in a loud voice who it was who was knocking at such an hour. King Philip, who heard the voice, replied and said : " Open, open, Chatelain, it is the unhappy King of France ". The chatelain, who recognised the King's voice, and had already heard of the defeat of his countrymen from some fugitives who had passed beneath the castle, immediately came forward and lowered the bridge and opened the door. Then the King entered, and all his party, which was small indeed . . . .[x]

But the surest proof of Froissart's superiority lies in his critical attitude to his own work, and to the fact that he never long remained satisfied with his writings, and least of all with his first redaction, of which so much had been borrowed from Jehan le Bel. No sooner was it finished than he started to re-write it, and he was constantly revising it till the end of his life, confirming or correcting his earlier statements, adding fresh matter and remodelling the expression. Few writers have ever been more scrupulous and indefatigable in this respect, as we can see from the large number of manuscripts that have been handed down to us. Many of these present such considerable variants and even contradictions that editors for a long time could find no suitable basis for classification. Sainte-Beuve describes the perplexity of a savant, who, having undertaken to give a new edition, worked for more than thirty years on the manuscripts, but the more he studied his author and the more manuscripts he collated, the more impossible did he find

it to choose a suitable basis for his text.[3] His edition of the Chronicles never appeared, and the task finally fell to another editor.

It has now been established that the fifty or more surviving manuscripts of the First Book give three distinct versions which differ so widely in both matter and expression that editors have been obliged to reproduce all three texts almost *in extenso*. The first of these, as we have seen, was composed for Robert of Namur, probably about the year 1373; the second was completed some time after 1376 at the request of a French knight, Guy de Blois, and the third was written some thirty years later, after the death of King Richard. It is unnecessary to emphasise the interest of these three versions; since they give us the chronicler's successive renderings of the same themes, made at different periods of his career, they enable us to follow the results of his investigations, his change of view, and his general evolution as a writer. It will frequently be necessary to refer to them therefore in studying Froissart's conception of the art of the historian.

If, for instance, we revert to the history of Scottish affairs we find that the account of the campaign already mentioned, which Froissart copied from Jehan le Bel, is reproduced textually in both the subsequent versions, and in this we can only commend Froissart's good sense, for Jehan le Bel had been an eye-witness, and could speak with authority. Similarly, in his first version, Froissart reproduced his predecessor's account of the following campaign of 1333, describing briefly Edward's demand that Berwick should be restored to the English and that the King of Scotland should pay homage to the King of England. But this

summary account Froissart subsequently considerably amplified, adding information which he collected personally during his stay in England and Scotland. Edward, we are told in this version, was not anxious for war owing to his family relationship with David II of Scotland, but he was surrounded by counsellors who were afraid that he might become slothful. Froissart then dramatises his narrative by bringing these counsellors face to face with the young King, and he shows by what arguments they induced him to embark upon a Scottish campaign. "Sire," they say, "you have sworn solemnly to maintain and defend the rights of your kingdom; if now you leave the good city of Berwick and the fine castle of Roxburgh in the hands of the Scots, you do not acquit yourself well of your oath, for you lessen your honour and your inheritance. . . . and all those who hear of it will say that it was done out of faintness of heart unworthy of a young lord. . . ." We then have a curious addition which was probably suggested by the gossip which the chronicler had heard at the English court: it sets forth the reasons with which the English backed their pretentions: "It is well known", say Edward's advisors, "that the King of Scotland paid homage in ancient times to the King of England, for the Scots have no kingdom of their own but belong to the province and to the archbishopric of York and to the kingdom of England. Moreover their money, their laws, their customs and their language are the same as in England; it is evident that the two countries once belonged to one lord, the King of England, who, having two sons gave England to the elder and Scotland to the younger son on condition that the latter should pay homage

to the King of England. But the Scots are hard of understanding and hold a different opinion, which is not to be suffered ".[1]

These modifications show how original is the second version compared with the first, but the final redaction is still more personal. Froissart here adds reflexions of his own and frequently gives vent to an outspoken criticism of men and events. The war was due, he says, to the aggressive character of the English, who dislike peace and always long for war, on no matter what grounds. The King himself is powerless, for he has to obey the commands of his people. If he is lazy and sleepy and thinks of nothing but his pleasures he will not be liked and his subjects will seek to be rid of him. " Such ", he adds, " was the opinion of the English held in Scotland as in all other countries, and no one who was wise would put much faith in them."

The ensuing chapters which relate the campaign show equally marked differences. English translations of Froissart reproduce only the first version of these events, and it is to be noted that in this version the chronicler makes no mention of his journey to Scotland and shows no personal knowledge of the events described in his narrative. The second version on the other hand embodies the reminiscences of Alexander Ramsay, the defender of Berwick, and of other Scottish knights who had talked to the chronicler of their experiences in the campaign. It is here that we read of the siege of Berwick ; it is here too that we learn how a truce was proclaimed during the siege of Roxburgh to allow the combatants on both sides to watch the single combat between Alexander Ramsay and William Montague, an episode which the

chronicler definitely states was related to him during his stay in Scotland. Finally it is in this same version that we read how Dalkeith was captured: how the English dressed eight of their varlets in the accoutrements of their leaders and sent them to the drawbridge of the castle preceded by a herald, who challenged the inmates to come forth and fight with these warriors for the sum of one hundred thousand florins, and how the Scots, who thought the challenge was genuine, lowered the drawbridge, which was forthwith seized by a party of English who were lying in wait.

Another episode in which Froissart's account differs widely from that of Jehan le Bel is the story of Edward's love for the Countess of Salisbury. The older historian, in a powerful and tragic passage, had depicted Edward in the rôle of a Tarquinius, sparing no detail in his description of the King's passionate assault upon the Countess whilst staying as a guest in her castle.[1] Froissart asserts that he had made many enquiries but could find no truth in this story. "I have dwelt in England for a long time, mostly in the household of the King, and with other nobles, but never did I hear any dishonourable report; and I have asked many people who would have known if there was any truth in the matter. So I could not believe, nor is it credible, that such a noble and valiant man as the King of England is and was, could dishonour one of his noble ladies or one of his knights who had served him loyally all his life."[2] But although he rejects this unpleasant version of the story he dwells at length on Edward's love-making, and this is all the more interesting for the light it throws on the customs of the times, seeing that the passage was apparently written during the King's life-time. It is

also striking to note that in the final version the episode is entirely suppressed, probably because the poet in Froissart had by this time completely surrendered to the historian.

These are but a few of the many changes and additions made in the various versions, all of which bear evidence of Froissart's originality as an historian and writer. As the young protégé of Queen Philippa he had shown the greatest respect for the authority of Jehan le Bel, but in later life he has no hesitation in emphasising his predecessor's deficiencies. "A man can never know everything", he says with reference to his model,[1] and as an introduction to his personal contributions, and even when he has nothing new to record, he will re-tell the story in his own words. So the chronicle of Jehan le Bel, which would have been of inestimable value had it not been continued and completed by Froissart, in no wise challenges Froissart's position as the greatest of medieval chroniclers. The Canon of Liège deserves all praise as a pioneer, and the very bluntness and simplicity of his style is not without charm, but Froissart has a vastly wider experience of life, a more cosmopolitan outlook, a more supple and mature manner, which clearly distinguish the greater from the lesser writer.

VII

THE CHRONICLER AND HIS FACTS

MONTAIGNE, in his chapter on Books,[1] states that he prefers either the very simple or else the excellent historian, and he explains that by simple he means one who mingles nothing of his own in his work and is content to record faithfully and indiscriminately everything that comes to his notice, whereas the excellent historian is one whom we can trust to select the facts and guide our judgment. Froissart, he considers, is an historian of the simple type: the Chronicles, we are told, are the crude and unshapen substance of history, where everyone can find profit according to his understanding, as the facts, to use Montaigne's picturesque expression, are in no wise chewed for the reader's consumption. The chronicler, in other words, does not interpose himself between the events he relates and the reader; like a *compère* in a review, he introduces his personages and then withdraws and allows them to play their part.

If this impression were strictly true, the Chronicles would be an impersonal history and therefore a remarkable exception amongst historical writings, especially in the Middle ages. "In every chronicler", says Siméon Luce, one of the best historians of this period, "there is usually the advocate, the panegyrist, or the detractor of a man, of a class, of a party, or

of a people, rather than the disinterested and impassionate witness." Froissart, in fact, is no exception to this general rule, and we have only to read the Prologue to realise how history is refracted in his pages: "Mankind", he says, "is divided into three classes, the valiant who face the perils of war to advance their persons and to increase their honour, the people who talk of their successes and fortunes, the clerks who write and record their great deeds". We learn moreover that his object is to relate the marvels of contemporary wars in order that every youth who wishes to win glory may find encouragement in the valiant deeds of his predecessors. According to the *Prologue*, therefore, the *Chronicles* are far from being the "unshapen substance of history"; on the contrary, they were composed with a special intention and from a special standpoint, and their author tells us on what principles he will select his matter and in what light he intends to present his facts. These considerations, however much they justify the term "simple", although in a sense different from that intended by Montaigne, must obviously be borne in mind if we are to seek in the *Chronicles* a history of Froissart's age. The only concession that we can make to the author of the *Essays* is that, as we are warned from the outset, we shall not be taken off our guard, and the reader, according to his understanding, can make due allowance for the chronicler's bias.

This bias, we must observe, was something more than the mere reflexion of the ideas of his patrons and of the aristocratic circles in which he lived. Froissart was not an aristocrat by birth and his success in court circles could only have been determined by

strongly pronounced ambitions. These ambitions, we have seen, manifested themselves in his early liking for romances of chivalry, and it is the same trait of character, the same admiration for all that is noble and gallant, that finds expression in the *Chronicles*. It is impossible, moreover, to explain in any other sense the immense enthusiasm which inspired the chronicler in his long and laborious undertaking; never, indeed, are we tempted to confuse this enthusiasm with a minstrel's desire to flatter and please his patrons.

It is clear that Froissart, with his chivalric conception of life, inherited for the most part from the poets of the preceding centuries, will leave many fields untouched in his history of contemporary events. Whilst delighting in the more ostentatious side of life, in descriptions of battles, sieges and tournaments and public festivities, he will tell us little or nothing of the wise administration of Charles V; he will have no understanding for the popular aspirations which were beginning to play such an important part in the politics of the times, nor will he say anything of the revival of learning which characterised his age; he will be unaware that others have usurped for Knowledge the place which he has accorded to Honour, and although the studious Christine de Pisan proclaims:

> Science est celle qui peut le mortel
> Faire muer en immortel,[1]

he will reserve no place in his vast gallery of portraits for scholars and translators such as Nicole Oresme and Pierre Bersuire.

Froissart's special intentions, moreover, as set forth in the *Prologue*, explain the disproportion in the

emphasis given to the various facts he relates. His description of the plague of 1349, which carried off, as he tells us, one third of the population, is dismissed in a few lines. There is nothing on the forms taken by the disease, nothing on its social consequences, as in Thucydides' description of the plague of Athens. On the other hand, when the chronicler relates the entry of a prince or the siege of a town he writes at great length. One might advance as an excuse that he had only a vague personal recollection of the plague, as he was but a child at the time ; nevertheless, if he had wished, he could have obtained information with as much ease as in the case of the battle of Cressy.

All this is in keeping with the aristocratic and exclusive principles which Froissart lays down in his *Prologue*. It is interesting to note, however, that even Froissart could not remain entirely aloof from the many changes which were taking place in the social world around him. In his later years, although he still views most things according to the conventional standards of chivalric circles, his outlook is less restricted and his attitude more critical. The change is possibly not unconnected with those realistic tendencies which were beginning to reveal themselves in contemporary art. Froissart's later chronicles, we find, are more in touch with the varied aspects of life. This is seen, for example, in his change of attitude towards the English. Whereas in his earlier writings he has nothing but praise for their chivalry and prowess, he blames them in his final version for " delighting in battles and slaughter ", and accuses them of being ambitious, aggressive and jealous of other men's possessions. It is in his final version, too, that he mentions for the first time the influence of

the merchants of London, whom he couples with the noble and prelates. We there learn that one of the causes of the dissatisfaction against the government of Edward II was the miscarriage of justice and the uncertain state of the country, which prevented merchants from travelling except at the risk of life and property, whilst the King in the meantime was thinking of nothing but his pleasures, his only concern being to get money to give to his favourite Hugh Despenser. It was this state of things that induced the Londoners to take up arms, and when Queen Isabella landed in England they marched six thousand strong to her assistance. It was their support that ensured the success of the expedition, for " when the Londoners are agreed no one dare resist them ; they are more powerful in men and money than all the rest of England ".

There is a similar change of tone when we pass from the history of Cressy and Poitiers to the tumultuous atmosphere of Flemish politics, to the record of popular opinion on the invasion of England or the terse comments on the Duke of Berry's exactions. In most of these later chapters not only is the outlook more comprehensive, but the characters are more individualistic. There are traits, for instance, in the portrait of Gloucester which are evidently drawn from a close observation of nature and which contrast strongly with the conventional contours of knightly figures in the early work ; in the same way, when we read of the cold-shouldering of Catherine Roët by the ladies of Richard's court we find ourselves in a society of flesh and blood which differs strikingly from the vague idealised court of Edward and the Black Prince.

We must therefore not judge Froissart too severely on the principles professed in the *Prologue*. As for the limits which he sets himself, even had he restricted his history to the record of contemporary wars the undertaking was vast enough. The Hundred Years' War dominated all other events of the fourteenth century, and the writer who attempted a military history of the times was obliged to include in his survey most of the countries of Europe. Never before had a history on this scale been seen in France.

The first part of his task, the searching out of facts, Froissart performed with unparalleled conscientiousness and industry. For some fifty years of his life he spared neither energy nor money in his quest for information. The spirit with which he pursued his investigations is seen in the following passage, which refers to his decision to journey to the South of France to obtain information concerning the wars in Spain:

> So long as I had, thanks to God, wit, memory and a good recollection of earlier events, a clear sharp mind to understand all the facts which might be related to me touching the matter in hand, age, body and limbs which could endure toil, I decided that I would not cease to continue my history . . .[1]

Even the knight seeking adventures "near and far" could not have led a more restless existence than the zealous scribe whom we have seen travelling the roads of England, France, Scotland and the Low Countries in quest of matter for his book. When an expedition was planned we find him inspecting and recording the preparations, whether in Bordeaux or in Flanders; when a treaty was discussed we find him in the antichamber ready to interview the ambassadors; when

a marriage was celebrated he was one of the guests. Wherever he went he was looked upon as the official historian, and every knight who had news to tell was anxious to have it recorded. In his voyages from court to court, he met, he tells us, more than two hundred princes, and there were few of these, we imagine, who did not contribute something to the *Chronicles*.

Froissart was evidently impressed by the importance and difficulty of his undertaking, and this in itself is a proof of his integrity. He was fully conscious of his limitations; he tells us frankly when he is ignorant of a matter and says that he cannot talk about it, or that he does so only on the testimony of others.[1]

The one weakness in his methods of investigation to which critics have called attention, is that he relied almost entirely on oral evidence and seldom consulted official documents, which he could easily have seen in the archives of the princes who took such a lively interest in his work. Few however will regret this omission when they read the pages of diplomatic jargon setting forth the clauses of the Treaty of Bretigny, which the chronicler extracted, according to his own statement, from documents contained in the Chanceries of both countries, probably because these documents were too ambiguous to be paraphrased in ordinary language.[2] As Debidour points out,[3] many of the documents which Froissart might have consulted are still in existence, so that his statements can be verified and corrected, whereas had the chronicler substituted in any measure the written archive for the spoken word of the actors engaged in the events which he describes, his work, though

gaining in accuracy, would have lost much of its dramatic charm and human interest.

In spite of Froissart's diligence, historians inform us that errors of fact abound in the Chronicles, especially as regards dates and topography, and it is well known that his proper names are often so deformed that they have defied identification,[1] even to this day, although the fault here is often that of later scribes. Above all, it is especially irritating to the reader in quest of accurate facts to meet with statements which are contradicted elsewhere in the narrative, and it is not surprising if many such readers have over-emphasised the chronicler's inaccuracies and have failed to do justice to his general reliability. The following, for instance, is a comparatively unimportant, but characteristic example of his discrepancies: in the first version we read that King David of Scotland had spent seven or more years in France, in the second version five or more years, whilst the third version gives ten years, and none of these figures tallies with the statement made elsewhere that the King left Scotland after the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War, that is to say, after 1337, to form an alliance with Philippe and that he returned in 1341, leaving an interval of three years only. But such mistakes as this are almost bound to occur in the work of an author who covers such a wide field and whose chief source of information was the oral testimony of men who took a part in events. That Froissart was anxious to correct these errors is seen from the many changes made in his final version, when he often corrects mistakes which he had copied from Jehan le Bel. If we judge him in fact according to the standards of his age, and not according to the standards

of to-day—although even in these days of printing and telegraphy we know how different accounts of the same events can vary—we find, according to the opinion of the authority already mentioned, Siméon Luce, that Froissart, in spite of his extensive field, equals, if he does not surpass, in accuracy most contemporary chroniclers.[1] As for his reputation for inaccuracy, this, according to the same historian, is due largely to the fact that for the period of the Hundred Years' War we have abundant archives which afford an effective means of control, whereas we have no such effective check in the case of other annalists. There is no doubt, too, that Froissart's fame as a writer, which rests upon other qualities besides his historical accuracy, has tended to magnify weaknesses which might have been overlooked in a more obscure author.

What is more difficult to determine than errors of dates or topography is the more subtle colouring of facts due to prejudices or sympathies from which no writer is entirely free, and particularly the man who writes, as Froissart wrote, on contemporary persons and events. It is not only the assertion that counts, but also the omission, not only the statement, but also the manner in which it is expressed. The task of the chronicler of the Hundred Years War' demanded a delicate poising of the balance of fairness between the two great belligerents, England and France. Froissart himself was fully aware of this. He knows that "each party says that his quarrel is good, the defendant as well as the plaintiff",[2] and his work reveals accordingly a constant preoccupation to hear both sides of the question. He declares that he will accept no reports concerning any country without

first finding out whether they are true. He thus supplements his first account of the wars in Portugal, the account obtained from the knights of the court of Gaston de Foix, who had fought on the side of the King of Castille, by information given him by English knights whom he met on his return journey through France, and also by a further report which he received from a Portuguese. Similarly for all his accounts of battles, Cressy, Poitiers, Cocherel or Auray, he especially tells us that he enquired "of one side and the other". For a still more precise account of his method we have only to refer to a note which he adds to his account of the battle of Otterburn: "I was made acquainted with all the particulars of this battle by knights and squires who had been actors in it on each side. There were also with the English two valiant knights of the county of Foix, whom I had the good fortune to meet at Orthez the year after this battle had been fought. Their names were Sir John de Chateauneuf and John de Cantiron. On my return from Foix I met likewise at Avignon a knight and two squires of Scotland of the party of Earl Douglas. They knew me again from the things I told them of their own country; for in my youth, I, the author of this history, travelled all through the kingdom of Scotland, and was fifteen days the guest of William of Douglas, father of this Earl James, of whom I am now speaking, at his castle of Dalkeith, five miles from Edinburgh. . . . I had my information therefore from both parties, who agree that it was the hardest and most obstinate battle that was ever fought".[1] Burton, in his history of Scotland, commenting on the narrative which Froissart thus obtained, affirms that it shows "so accurate a knowledge of

persons and places, and gives the sequence of events so distinctly, that by internal evidence it would commend itself to belief as rendered from the information of eye-witnesses by one who had carefully questioned them and had a peculiar capacity for getting at the truth of such affairs ".

Had Froissart any personal sympathies which could influence him in writing up his facts ? As native of Valenciennes he was not bound traditionally to either of the two great belligerent countries. The province of Hainault was first the ally of the English, then of the French. Count William's daughter was Queen of England, his wife Jeanne was sister of Philippe de Valois. At the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War when William and John of Hainault were staunch supporters of Edward in his claim to the French crown, Froissart's province had suffered considerably at the hands of the French, who had pillaged and burnt towns and villages as far as the very gates of Valenciennes. At that time therefore, Froissart's compatriots could have had little affection for their French neighbours. On the other hand their feelings must have changed when John of Hainault went over to Philippe and fought side by side with him at Cressy. As regards his origins, therefore, Froissart was not more inclined to one side than the other. It is true that he calls himself French on one occasion, but in another passage he is careful to differentiate, saying that he was taken for a Frenchman by an Englishman, as is usual in the case of a person who speaks French.

Froissart was formerly accused of feelings of hostility towards the French, but this charge was disposed of more than a century ago by Lacurne de Ste-Palaye, who states, in Johnes' translation : " In short, of all

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[*face p.* 98.

the nations whom he mentions in his history there are but few whom he has not sometimes marked with odious epithets. According to him the Portuguese are passionate and quarrelsome, the Spaniard envious, haughty and uncleanly, the Scots perfidious and ungrateful, the Italians assassins and poisoners, the English vain boasters, contemptous and cruel. There is not one trait against the French: on the contrary this brave nation supports itself, according to Froissart, by the vigour and strength of its chivalry, which was never so totally overwhelmed by its misfortunes as not in the end to find some marvellous resource in its courage".

The truth appears to be that although Froissart himself does not take sides he has often stirred the partisan feelings of his readers. It is only in this way that we can explain the mutilation of the Vatican manuscript, the sole manuscript giving the final version of the First Book. A folio describing the final scene of the battle of Cressy has been removed, the missing page being the continuation of the sentence: "From the point where he was he (*sc.* Edward) could see the condition of the French, which was as bad as it could be, for as fast as they entered the battle they melted in disorder . . . ". The sequence was doubtless a description of a disastrous defeat, and its removal gives us good reason to suspect a reader's high-handed method of showing his disapproval.[1]

But even though Froissart is no longer accused of being systematically unfair to the French, it is still maintained that he is at one time pro-English and at others pro-French according to his environment at the time of writing.[2] This opinion is generally

based upon a comparison of the different versions of the First Book written at different periods of his career, the first to the order of Robert of Namur, a knight in the service of Edward III, and the second to that of Guy de Chatillon, whose father was killed in the French ranks at Cressy. The passages which are supposed to justify this view are contained in the successive accounts of Cressy and Poitiers. The first states that when Philip came in sight of the English his blood began to boil and he rushed to the attack, forgetting his decision to postpone the fight till the following day, in order to give his men time to rest after their long march. The second gives a different explanation, saying that the King did in fact issue orders to delay the attack but they were disregarded by his knights who rushed ahead of one another in their eagerness to come to blows with the enemy. The same version moreover says nothing of the King's order to kill the Genoese, who had fallen back in disorder on the French lines. There is also a notable difference as regards the numbers of the combatants and also of the killed. Whereas the first states that the English force totalled 8,200 men the later account gives the much larger figure of 24,000. Similarly the French losses are given as 16,000 to 17,000, instead of 30,000. All of these changes tend to diminish the magnitude of the French defeat.

But the comparison ought not to stop at this point. In addition to the above modifications, which have been taken as an indication of a change of attitude in favour of the French, one finds passages which tend equally to contradict such a view. The blame which the chronicler takes from Philip he puts on the shoulders of the French nobles whom he

accuses of pride and lack of discipline and of conduct unworthy of good soldiers, and he repeats this scathing criticism in three passages which he has added to his original account. Seeing that there were other causes to explain the defeat, the fatigue of the French army, the disadvantage of the sun and the confusion caused by the darkness, his insistence upon this reason shows clearly that he was not swayed by any feelings of partiality towards the French at the time of writing his second version, for nothing, including the criticism of the French King himself, could be less flattering to the company of French knights with whom he was then living.

As for Froissart's remarks on the conduct of Philip, they appear extremely generous when compared with the criticisms of Jehan le Bel, whose patron, John of Hainault, fought beside the French King at the Battle of Cressy. The blunt and outspoken chronicler of Liège draws the following parallel between the two Kings, Edward and Philip :

> Some may wonder why I call the King of England the noble King Edward, whilst I call Philip merely King Philip, and they may think that I do so from bias. With all due respect, I am not prejudiced, but I do it to honour him who has acted the more nobly in this history, that is to say the noble King Edward, who cannot be too highly honoured. He has always accepted good counsel in his needs and listened to his people, knights and squires, and he has honoured all of them, according to their condition. He has well defended his kingdom against his enemies and has made many conquests, exposing his own person to peril with his people, and he has well paid his soldiers and allies and given richly of his wealth ; so he deserves the name of noble king, and all should serve him willingly. King Philip of France has not acted thus, for he has allowed his country to be devastated and pillaged, and has always taken care to live in comfort and to keep out of danger ; he has always followed the weak counsel of clerks and prelates

and of those who said to him: "Dear Sire, remain calm and risk not your person, for you might have difficulty in protecting yourself against treason, for one can never say who is to be trusted; but let this young King of England waste his time in his foolish enterprises and spend his substance, his smoke will not take your heritage from you, and when he has spent everything he must turn back; he has still not captured Boulogne, Amiens, or St. Omer. When he has returned you will easily recover your losses". Such were the counsellors whom King Philip believed, and not the lords and barons of his country, many of whom he put to an ugly death and disinherited their heirs; so he should be less esteemed and honoured. Moreover he has grievously oppressed his country with taxes and his churches with tithes, and has minted bad coinage, making it rise and fall in value as he pleased, so that all commerce was uncertain; his soldiers were never paid, but spent their own substance and were obliged to sell their horses and armour whilst awaiting the paymaster. A prince who governs thus should be less beloved by his people. . . .[1]

Froissart, who has reproduced so much of Jehan le Bel in his first version, has omitted this ruthless attack on the French King, and this in itself shows that even in that part of his work in which he is supposed to favour the English he has a sense of fairness sufficiently strong to make him reject an unflattering opinion of their adversary.

We must finally note that when Froissart re-wrote these early chapters towards the end of his life he adopted the first or so-called "English" version of Cressy, but included the later correction as to the numbers of the combatants. But at that time he was by no means favourably disposed towards the English, and certainly had no fear of offending them by his comments. It is evident therefore that he had well weighed the evidence on both sides when he declares: "In these matters one can learn the truth from the victors better than from the discomfited, for the former have more leisure and greater clearness

of mind, and are more careful to observe than those who are intent upon fleeing ".[1]

As for the Battle of Poitiers, the second version of which is said to reveal a French influence, there is only one variation which supports this view. Whereas the numerical superiority of the French is given in the first account as seven to one this is changed in the second redaction to five to one. If there were any reason such as that suggested underlying this change one would expect a corresponding toning down of other passages describing the French collapse. But these passages are repeated literally, including the report of the flight of the French lords and of the Duke of Orleans, with his army safe and intact.

In view of the above considerations it is obviously totally unfair to the chronicler to doubt the sincerity of his oft repeated declaration that he favours no side in his history, or, as he says more specifically in a passage which does credit to both himself and his patron: " Let it not be said that I have corrupted this noble history through the favour accorded me by Count Guy de Blois, for whom I wrote it. No, indeed! for I will say nothing but the truth and keep a straight course without favouring one side or the other; moreover, the noble Count, who made me write this history, would not wish me to give anything but the true version of events ".

Froissart's independence of judgment is all the more remarkable in the discussion of personal matters. Commines, writing a century later, speaks of the older chroniclers with contempt, saying that they write only of things in praise of those of whom they speak. This indeed is frankly admitted by some of the earlier chroniclers; Adenet le Roi, for instance, states that

he intends to record only the good and to suppress the evil :

> De cele volonté ja mesme partirai,
> Se Dieu plaiſt et ses sains tant com je viverai,
> ce eſt que des preudoms volontiers parlerai ;
> Se d'eux sai aucun bien je le recorderai,
> Se de nului sai mal, treſtout coi m'en tairai ;
> Ainsi le doit on faire et ainsi le ferai.[1]

This is not Froissart's method, however. Few of the leading figures in the *Chronicles* entirely escape criticism. We are told that King Philip too readily believed his informers ; that his queen was a very cruel woman, and that whoever incurred her hatred was executed without pity ; that King John, her son, was " very much of the same character " and brought great trouble on the country by his cruel sentences ; we are also told that King Charles VI, according to popular opinion, brought his illness upon himself by his excesses in early life ; as for his uncle, the Duke of Berry, he is often reproached for his extravagance in terms which leave us in no doubt as to the chronicler's sympathy for the poor people of Languedoc, who were taxed three or four times a year to provide money for their maſter's foolish pleasures. Even the Black Prince, Froissart's greateſt hero, is criticised for his pride and overbearing.

As for Froissart's more immediate patrons, we muſt not be misled by eulogiſtic portraits such as that of Gaſton de Foix, for this was probably not exaggerated according to the ſtandards of the age ; Gaſton's family affairs, for inſtance, were not likely to affeſt the chronicler's appreciation, seeing that contemporary princes and even bishops not uncommonly left numerous illegitimate children. If Froissart had wished to hide unpleasant truths for personal reasons

he would not have called attention so insistently to the breach of faith of the Duke of Brabant, who was father of Jeanne, wife of his patron Wenceslas; he accuses the duke of swimming between two waters, giving the King of England to understand that he would help him and at the same time assuring the King of France that he would never be anything but a good Frenchman. Guy de Blois himself, the patron to whom the chronicler was most indebted, is not always painted in the most favourable colours; he tells us that he was self-indulgent and comments bitterly on his weakness in selling his inheritance to the Duke of Touraine, on the advice of his wife, a covetous woman, and his unlettered valet de chambre. The frankness with which Froissart discusses these matters, which so closely concerned his personal interests, is an obvious proof of the good faith which inspires the *Chronicles* as a whole.

We have further to note that the question of the historical accuracy of the *Chronicles* is in some measure bound up with certain features of Froissart's style. The modern historian, whilst admiring his talent as a writer, must evidently condemn his method of writing history, in so far as he invents, for dramatic effect, speeches for his personages. This procedure is met with in most early history and still enjoys a considerable vogue, even to-day, in works written not for the specialist, but for the general public. Froissart, we must remember, was writing for a public which still devoured the "fabulous stories" related by minstrels in the market-places, and such people required not an abstract précis but the living word. Before condemning these speeches therefore, we should examine the chronicler's method of inventing them,

for this is possible at times. If, for example, we take the speech in which Robert d'Artois endeavours to persuade Edward to declare war on France, which is added in the final version, we find that the arguments used by Edward's adviser, the king's youth, the resources of his people, the possibility of German assistance, are all drawn from circumstances related elsewhere in the *Chronicles*. If such speeches were necessary therefore, they could not have been invented with greater regard for historical accuracy.

There remains a final question concerning Froissart's status as historian, and this is raised by the chronicler himself. In his Third Book, written in 1390, he states that it is his ambition to write not a chronicle, which merely records events, but a history which examines and explains them.[1] Since setting out to record his annals of chivalry he has thus come to the same conclusion as the modern historian who states that the writer who does not explain phenomena as well as state them performs only one half his office. We will not fix a ratio ; one historian will be arrested by the event itself, another will regard it only as a symbol and seek its meaning, and there is room for a wide variety between the two extremes. Froissart, in spite of his ambition, belongs to the former type ; his genius is descriptive rather than speculative, he is interested more in actions than in motives, he seizes the expression rather than the thought. Moreover, writing from day to day of contemporary events he usually lacks the perspective which alone could enable him to co-ordinate his facts, and the general arrangement of his narrative in chronological order, which necessitates frequent transitions from one subject to another, shows that he was less concerned

with the sequence of events than with the desire to present a survey of the simultaneous happenings in different theatres.

At the same time he is less superficial than is often stated, especially when judged on his later writings. In his Third Version he goes to the very root of matters in assigning the cause of the wars to the ambitious character of the English people, who are not content except when their king is waging war on their neighbours. In the same version he records the preparations made by Edward before declaring war: the doubling of the wool tax, the prohibition of all games and amusements except practice with the bow and arrow, the prohibition of the exportation of horses, the arrangements made for the paying of troops, and the order that all children should learn French; so that he evidently thinks that success is not due to valour alone but also to organisation, training and equipment. Similarly, when relating the wars in Portugal or the French expedition to Africa, he emphasises the difficulties of supplies and climate. There are passages in the *Chronicles*, in fact, which would not be unworthy of that astute politician Commines. He thus informs us that when peace was established between England and France it was mainly due to the counsels of the Duke of Lancaster and the Duke of Burgundy, both of whom were prompted by their personal interests. The former desired peace because his daughters were married, one to the King of Portugal, the other to the King of Spain, and war between England and France would mean hostilities between these two countries; at the same time the Duke of Burgundy was influenced by his interests in Flanders and Brabant, for he knew that these countries

for economic reasons would join with England in the event of war. In the Third Version again we read of the causes other than military of the English successes in Gascony and the South of France; here, for instance, is a description of the psychology of the Gascon knight:

> When the Gascon lords who had been captured at the battle of Auberoche came to France to inform the king of the bad state of affairs in Gascony and how the English would gain possession of the whole country if not opposed, when they asked too for help in paying their ransoms, no one would listen to them and they could not obtain an audience. They were thus left sitting in the palace and elsewhere, although, in addition to their other losses they had spent money to come to Paris. When they laid their petitions before those to whom they were sent they received the answer, "Come to-morrow", but this to-morrow never came. And the same thing happened daily. These barons and knights of Gascony, therefore, were greatly displeased, and cursed the arrogance of France and the place where the king and his council were, and they left Paris in anger and with more debts than when they arrived there.[1]

Elsewhere we learn why the English were so popular: it was mainly because the Bordelais and Gascons paid fewer taxes under the English régime, whereas in "turning" French they would have had to meet the heavy claims of the French collector.

It is important to note that in all these matters Froissart sought a purely rational cause of events. In one case, it is true, he falls back upon the intervention of the devil, namely, in his account of the wars in Flanders; but it is the only example, and even that is possibly no more than a figure of speech. In this respect his good sense contrasts in the most striking manner with the supernatural explanations which are found in some of his contemporaries. His account of Cressy, for instance, showing the lack of discipline

and impatience of the French on the one hand, and the calm self-control of the English on the other, has been compared with that given by the author of the *Grandes Chroniques*. According to this version Edward was simply God's instrument for punishing the French for their extravagant fashions in dress, especially for wearing the short tunic, which had just become the fashion :

> We ought therefore to believe that God allowed this thing as a punishment for our sins, although it is not for us to judge. But we testify to what we see . . . . pride of power, desire for wealth and impropriety of dress were widespread in the kingdom of France. Some wore tunics so short that they did not reach to the thighs and when they knelt down before a lord they showed their breeches and the shape of their persons to those standing behind; and these tunics were so narrow that those who wore them required assistance to dress and undress, and to undress them was like skinning them. Others had robes gathered at the hips like women and capes daintily cut, and wore one stocking of one stuff and the other of another, and their cornettes and their sleeves reached almost to the ground so that they looked more like jesters than anything else. So is it not a wonder that God wished to punish the extravagance of the French by his scourge, the King of England.[1]

However absurd such reasoning may appear to us nowadays, it was thoroughly normal in medieval times, when belief in miracles of all kinds was generally current. Froissart, in eliminating the supernatural, was thus greatly in advance of his contemporaries : " He carries us into a new world ", says the historian Buckle, " the old theological spirit being destroyed ",[2] and this achievement in itself entitles him to a high place in the ranks of historians.

VIII

FROISSART'S OUTLOOK ON LIFE

For the reason stated in the conclusion of the last chapter, one would never suspect, in reading the Chronicles, that Froissart was a priest by profession. His writings have none of that religious colouring which normally marks early histories composed by priests. On the contrary, he seems to dissociate God from the events of this world, as though he had too much respect for Providence to connect divine action in any way with the game of war and politics which so engrossed his contemporaries. He quickly disposes of those who make religion a pretext for conquest. The Grace of God is indeed good, he says, but we see few lords nowadays increase their possessions otherwise than by force.[1]

This elimination of the deity is characteristic of the times. In this century of unrest, which saw the upheaval of so many medieval traditions, men had created for themselves a deity more in harmony with the spirit of the age than the God of the New Testament. This deity was Fortune. She had been brought forth by Alain de Lille and Jean de Meung from the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* of Boëthius. She became the strange ally of theologians, and even found her way into cathedrals, where the devout could gaze upon the stained glass representations of her wheel which stood as a warning to men not to put too great

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FORTUNE'S WHEEL.

British Museum Harleian MS. 4431.

[*face p.* 110.

faith in the prosperity of this world. During the Hundred Years' War, when wealth and power were rapidly changing hands, when the best and the noblest were at the mercy of armed bands who ravaged the country, it was to Fortune that the instability of human affairs was generally assigned, and poets in every land voiced her supremacy :

> This wrecched worldes transmutacioun,
> As wele or wo, now povre and now honour,
> Withouten ordre or wys discrecioun,
> Governed is by Fortunes errour.[1]

None, however, could better testify to the fickleness of the goddess than the man who recorded all the vicissitudes of the century, including the imprisonment and death of Edward II and Richard II, the capture of King John and David Bruce, the flight of the Count of Flanders, expelled from his country by his people, who set up d'Arteveldt of humble origin in his stead, to say nothing of the defeat of splendid armies containing the flower of French chivalry, like that which was routed at Poitiers, contrary to all human expectations. It is Fortune, says Froissart, who governs the affairs of life, raising men to the top of her wheel, and then relentlessly overthrowing them :

> . . . elle met un homme en haut,
> Ne l'en chaut
> Comment voist, puis le renverse
> Et le berse
> A un trop villain bersaut.[2]

Or, as we read in the Chronicles, of knights of mean extraction : " When they are raised up and think themselves secure Fortune overturns them in the mire and leaves them lower than they were at first ".[3] Finally the same theme gives the chronicler his formula

for war: "Now down, now up, such is the nature of war".[1]

As Fortune is as changeable as the weathercock the morrow is so uncertain that it would be foolish to take life seriously; such is the philosophy of Froissart's poetry. We must take what is given us, comforting ourselves with the thought that our lot is ever changing, or, as the poet puts it, that there is a new moon every month:

On doit le temps ainsi prendre qu'il vient
Toutdis ne peut durer une fortune,
Un temps se perd et puis l'autre vient,
On doit le temps ainsi prendre qu'il vient.

Je me conforte a ce qu'il me souvient
Que tous les mois avons nouvelle lune,
On doit le temps, ainsi prendre qu'il vient.[2]

"Nonchalance" is his motto, he who weeps in the morning will laugh in the evening:

Tout metterai en nonchaloir,
Tel pleure au matin qui rit au soir.[3]

And it is pleasure alone that makes life worth living:

Qui n'a plaisance il n'a rien.[4]

In the Chronicles this philosophy generally expresses itself as a devil-may-care attitude to life, which is typical of the century. We read of treacheries, crimes and murders, which are related as the most ordinary events of existence, with no word of condemnation, no expression of horror. He describes how Gaston de Foix murdered his son in a fit of passion, but although he is sorry for this crime, which deprived the country of its heir, he nevertheless considers Gaston the most perfect of knights. Galeas Visconti murdered his uncle, probably "by bleeding

him in the neck, as they are wont to do in Lombardy when they wish to hasten a person's end", and the crime, we are told, met with almost universal approval.

The chronicler's admiration for deeds of prowess leaves little room for sentiments of sympathy for the weaker combatant. The Flemish and French knights invading Friesland were so heavily armed that the Frisians, who were badly equipped, many being even shoeless, were incapable of hurting them and could only throw them on their backs. In spite of this inequality, the chronicler narrates the slaughter of the wretched inhabitants with his usual enthusiasm, and even remarks that so many great and noble feats of arms were performed that it would be impossible to record them all; nor does it seem at all remarkable to him, in describing the "great and horrible" pursuit of the Frisians, that none should be taken prisoner, and that Hainaulters, French and English should slay all who came within their reach.[1]

Many examples could be given of the sacking of towns and the murder of women and children, related with the same indifference. Yet we must not unduly despise the chronicler on that account, for familiarity with the horrors of war will harden even the most sensitive nature. If Froissart had lacked feeling he would probably have attached less importance to this unattractive side of war, and he certainly would never have been capable of writing descriptions such as that of the pathetic departure of the burgesses from the gates of Calais. There are times, moreover, although these are rare, when he falls back upon his religious principles, as when he narrates the destruction of Caen by Edward III: "In recording the persecutions, the slaughter, the violence and the great pestilence

which then prevailed in the town of Caen, it is a pity and a great horror to think that Christians can find pleasure in thus destroying one another". If Froissart had thought more often on these lines how different would have been his history of the Hundred Years' War!

In diplomacy, now that the spirit of chivalry was beginning to wane, there was no question of right or wrong. Froissart expresses no opinion, for example, of the circumstances of the truce of Bruges of 1375. When the terms of the truce were being discussed the French were beseiging Saint Sauveur, which had agreed to surrender unless relieved by the Duke of Brittany in person. At the same time the English were beseiging Quimperly, which had also been brought to capitulate, and was to surrender in eight days if not relieved. The King of France, who had a service of messengers between Brittany and Paris and between Paris and Bruges, instructed the Duke of Anjou to come to terms at once with the Duke of Lancaster. The truce was therefore signed; messengers arrived in time to save the capture of Quimperly but the French beseiging Saint Sauveur refused to raise the seige. So Saint Sauveur was taken and held by the French in spite of strong protestations from England. Froissart doubtlessly prefers to leave the discussion of right and wrong in such matters to clerks learned in the law.

There is one vice which never fails to attract criticism in the *Chronicles*, and that is pride and presumption. No one who is wise, says Froissart, will put too much faith in the prosperities of this world, and he holds out the examples of Arteveldt as a warning to men not to expect too much from this

life. It was the pride of the nobles that lost the battle of Cressy; it was the pride of King Philip and his son Jean that estranged the Gascons from the cause of France,[1] and when the Black Prince in turn fell a victim to the same vice the Gascons were again won back by "the gentleness, the generosity and the humility of King Charles, of good memory". Froissart, in thus taxing the pride of his contemporaries, may possibly have had in mind the Christian virtue of humility, but it is probable that if he chose this tenet of Christianity rather than another it was because his worldly experience had taught him that the proud and assuming man was most exposed to the caprice of Fortune.

At the same time, it is interesting to note that Froissart, unlike some writers of the later Middle Ages, did not altogether overlook the moral side of matters—he is not quite so cynical as Commines, for example, who declares that where the profit lies, there too is the honour. That he recognised other virtues besides warlike qualities can be seen from his judgment on the career of the great adventurer Aymerigot Marcel: "Had Aymerigot turned his mind to virtue", he says, "he would have done much good, for he was an able man at arms and of great courage; but having acted in a different manner he came to a disgraceful death".

The church in the fourteenth century, just as it gave no standard of values to the chronicler, gave no rule of life to the men who enact his history. Even before the schism Edward had been inclined to snap his fingers at the Pope. When the latter at the instigation of the King of France, had forbidden the priests of Flanders to sing mass, Edward overcame the difficulty

by importing three hundred English priests into the country. But after the schism, when Christendom was divided between Rome and Avignon, the church commanded little respect from either Christians or Saracens. "The Turks and the Tartars boast of their conquests", says the King of Armenia, "and jeer at the two Popes . . . saying that the two gods of the Christians are waging war on each other and that their rule is thus weakened and easily to be overthrown, seeing that those who should exalt it belittle it and destroy it."

The quarrels which thus divided the church were God's punishment for the luxurious living of the clergy, we read in the *Chronicles*, for they were so blinded by pride and presumption that each wished to equal or surpass the other.[1] Froissart thus re-echoes the preaching of Jean de la Roche Taillade, whom he had seen in his youth imprisoned in Avignon. The friar's words had been passed secretly from mouth to mouth, and the cardinals stood accused of spending wastefully and extravagantly, for their own enjoyment, the money intended for the services of God. The chronicler in his early work is as cautious as other men, but when in his Third Version he re-writes his description of the sumptuous following of the cardinal Guy de Boulogne he adds the caustic remark: "Never did St. Peter, nor St. Paul, nor St. Andrew ride in such pomp".[2]

Self-interest is the chief factor in church affairs. "It's money that gets benefices", says a line of the *Dit du Florin*[3], which sums up one of the worst abuses of the times. If the English supported Urban it was for no other motive than that the French favoured Clement.[4] When Urban launched his campaign

against his rival he relied more upon money than upon the enthusiasm of his adherents, and the chronicler states that the English people were easily enticed to give their money in the belief that they would not otherwise enter Paradise. But when the "crusade", under the command of the Bishop of Norwich, disembarked at Calais, instead of marching against the Clementists, it attacked the good Urbanists, the Flemish, and the reason which the Bishop gave for this change of policy and breach of faith was that that province was likely to afford "most pleasure and profit". The Romans, we learn, were anxious to retain their Pope on account of the wealth which the Pope's pardons brought to the city. Or again, when the cardinals deserted Benedict of Avignon in obedience to the summons received from the King of France, it was because they did not wish to lose their revenues, which were derived from France.[1] Finally, the discontent which prevailed at the University of Paris, causing all the clerks to leave their books, was due to the difficulty of obtaining benefices under the regime of the schism. It was in the University, however, that a solution was found for these troubles in the proposal that the two Popes should be asked to resign and that clerks of good conscience should be brought together from France, Germany and other nations, who should restore unity in the church, without favour or prejudice.

This independence of outlook in church matters is to be coupled with the fairness of treatment which the chronicler accords to those of a different faith. Saracens, he says, never break their word, and we are told that during the siege of Africa they did not risk themselves foolhardily but fought with valour and

more prudence than the Christians. As for Mourad Bey, when he conquered a town he allowed the people to keep their beliefs and to remain in possession of their inheritance. In all these comments we must credit Froissart for his generous treatment of an adversary and an unbeliever, which is all the more remarkable, seeing that but a short time had elapsed since the authors of the *Chansons de Geste* could find no greater praise for a hero than that he had converted or slaughtered all captured unbelievers.

If the chronicler appears at times to believe in the supernatural, it is not for any religious motive. In his account of the bands of Flagellants who traversed the countries of Europe after the plague of 1349, he expressly condemns the folly of the women who thought that the blood from the penitents' wounds had magic properties. Most of his contemporaries were far less critical. Jean Molinet, in the fifteenth century, for instance, relates how a legion of devils took possession of a convent of nuns at Le Quesnoy, and how the Bishop of Cambray exorcised a particularly obstinate spirit by putting his fingers in the mouth of a nun and pronouncing the words: "If thou hast power to do evil or to bite these holy fingers, exercise that power; if not, open the mouth, I command thee".

Froissart records no miracles of this sort, although there must have been no lack of them in an age when even an enlightened king like Charles the Wise took counsel from astrologers. The supernatural of another kind, however, he readily admits, for he will repeat any story which reminds him of the tales of magic and enchantment he had so often read in Romance. As a pretext for relating the story of Acteon he describes the experience of a Gascon knight,

who, after killing a bear in the forest, used to rise in his sleep and fight an imaginary enemy; this enemy, the chronicler thinks, was a knight changed into a bear. He tells us of a spirit who carried news to a baron from the four corners of the earth. He also relates that when the Duke of Anjou was besieging a castle at Naples a necromancer came to him and offered to make a magic bridge across the sea by which men could advance to the assault. The Duke of Anjou and his advisers, we are told, at first accepted the offer; the Duke of Savoy alone protested that such arts were not allowed by the laws of chivalry, and ordered the wizard to be beheaded.

But it is extremely doubtful that Froissart himself believed these stories; in any case he does not believe all he hears:

> J'ai oï a parler souvent
> De la fontaine de Jouvent,
> Ossi de pieres invisibles;
> Mès ce sont choses impossibles.[1]

It is obvious that the supernatural only attracted him when it appealed to his poetic imagination. Poetry played such a large part in the life of the times that the Chronicles would lose rather than gain in truthfulness if these passages were suppressed. There is one story at any rate that we should not like to omit, that of the nymphs and fairies whom the Count of Nevers is supposed to have seen in the island of Cephalonia, on his return from the disastrous crusade in Hungary:

> They (sc. the French knights) jumped from their boats and found a great number of ladies and damsels who live in this island and govern it. These ladies received the French Knights with much joy and took them to desport themselves in the island, which is fair and pleasant. And

> those who know the island say and maintain that it is inhabited by nymphs and fairies, and that Venetian and Genoese merchants who had been brought there by the fortunes of the sea had seen these things and witnessed the truth of these reports. . . . Such is the nature of the island that no one dares to approach it who intends to do evil; and if he did, he would perish.[1]

It would be a still graver error, moreover, if we allowed ourselves to be misled by this apparent credulousness in the matter of fairies, to the opinion that the chronicler was unsophisticated in the things of this world. Just as in the poems devoted to the idealisation of Love we find lines which make us doubt the sincerity of all the poet's outbursts, so in the *Chronicles* we find sidelights on human nature which show that Froissart saw other traits in his fellow beings besides those noble virtues which he at first set out to illustrate. It is striking to hear what the secretary of "good Queen Philippa", who had so often sung the praises of generosity, says of the gratitude of men: "Think you that those who have received great gifts from you will return them? God help me, no! but they will shun you when they see you no longer able to give more, and will mock at you and your foolish generosity, and you will find no friend among them".[2] We have already seen in matters of religion that he is not slow in finding the personal motives behind men's actions, but priests are not his only butt; he strikes a theme destined to be extremely popular in later comedy in his portrait of William of Harseley, surgeon to Charles VI.[3] The doctor was appointed to this office, we are told, at an ample salary, according to the custom of medical men, whose object it is to obtain large fees and as much profit as possible from the lords and ladies who call

for their aid. "This same surgeon", the chronicler adds, "was the most niggardly man of his times; his sole pleasure was to amass money, and he never spent a farthing at home, but ate and drank abroad, whenever he could". Even the knight has weaknesses, not unknown in the modern soldier; the Earl of Harcourt, retained as hostage in England, having obtained leave to go to France, contracted an illness when there, "at a very opportune moment, for it lasted till war broke out again".[1]

As for the ladies, whom Froissart usually idealises, we are interested to find that they too have their human side. When the Duke of Lancaster married his third wife, Catherine de Roët, who had been one of the damsels of the chamber to his first wife Blanche, there was great consternation, the chronicler says, amongst the ladies of royal descent; the Duchess of Gloucester, the Countess of Derby and others declared: "We will let her perform the honours alone. We will not go to any place where she is, for we should be greatly to blame if such a Duchess, who is of mean extraction and has been for a long time the concubine of the Duke, were to have precedence over us. Our hearts would burst with grief, and with good cause". It is to be noted that on this occasion Froissart forgets his aristocratic bias and speaks well of the new duchess, who was his compatriot, being the daughter of a Hainault knight who had served Queen Philippa. It is with a certain pride, therefore, that he adds: "This Catherine de Roët remained, as long as she lived, Duchess of Lancaster, the second lady in England and elsewhere, after the Queen of England, and she was a lady who was well versed in etiquette, for she had been accustomed to it from her youth onwards; and

she greatly loved the Duke and the children she bore him; and she showed it in life and in death".

Finally, Froissart never fails to interest us when he expresses views concerning various nations. Although his statements contain many repetitions and are often in the nature of formulæ, the very consistency of his views shows that they are probably backed by the public opinion of his day. The people he dislikes most are the Germans. They fight only for money, he says, and their conduct in war is lacking in courtesy:

> It were better for a nobleman to be taken by an unbeliever, a heathen, a Saracen, than by Germans; for Germans keep their noble prisoners in stocks of iron and handcuffs, contrary to all rule and reason, and torture and weaken them in order to extract a bigger ransom. Indeed, it is a wonder that knights like the English and French, who practise courtesy, have intercourse with them or consent to bear arms with them. . . .[1]

He has little admiration moreover for the Spaniard as a fighter:

> The nobles are brave provided they are mounted; but when they have launched their assault they turn their backs, spur their horses and flee without looking behind them.[2]

As for the Italians, his criticism is directed mostly against their princes. Galeas and Barnabo, he says, were so greatly feared by their people that no one dared anger them, for if any opposed them he was destroyed, together with all his lineage. Their principle of government was to keep their people in subjection. When they married they bought their wives with money extorted from their subjects.[3] The younger, Galeas, was considered a Christian; yet he allied himself with the unbeliever Mourad Bey,

to whom he sent presents of dogs and birds and fine Rheims linen. He robbed abbeys and priories of their revenues on the pretext that the monks were too well fed to get up at midnight to perform their office. The daughter of Galeas, Valentine, whose dowry of a million francs had enabled her husband, the Duke of Orleans, to purchase the county of Blois, is described as jealous and greedy of the pleasures and pomps of the world, desiring that her husband, by no matter what means, should succeed to the throne of France. Froissart thus lends colour to the suspicions which accused her of causing the king's illness. This sinister portrait of Valentine is said to have been prompted by the chronicler's partisanship for the cause of the Duke of Burgundy, the great rival of the House of Orleans; but Froissart seems to have had friendly relations with both sides, seeing that in 1393 he presented a book to the Duke of Orleans, from whom he received a present of twenty gold francs.[1] It seems more probable that his antipathy was directed more particularly against the House of Milan and that his dislike dates from the time when Lionel, Duke of Clarence, was reported to have been murdered by Galeas Visconti. We can well imagine that Froissart's sympathies would be aroused on behalf of the prince whose marriage he had so recently attended, especially as it was his friend Edward Despenser who undertook to avenge Lionel's death, and received the thanks and congratulations of Edward for his action.

France, in spite of all that has been said of the chronicler's bias, is invariably referred to in terms of affection and admiration. It is evident that Froissart, in all his travels, had found no country more attractive than that "most pleasing country of France, that

sweet and courteous land with its fine meadows and gentle streams, its beautiful villages and houses, where the air is so good, the wines so sweet, and the springs so temperate; that great and noble kingdom, the home of so many good knights . . . where all lords and all ladies are more honourable and more cultured than in any other country".[1] France, it is true, was not generally victorious in the wars recorded in the *Chronicles*, but success was not the sole measure of merit in the days of chivalry, and it is with admiration that the chronicler declares that France was never so discomfited as not to find warriors to fight for her.

The other country on which Froissart has most pronounced opinions is England. He has never anything but praise for the courtesy of the English knight, but towards the end of his life he began to realise that behind the ideals of chivalry which he had exalted in his earlier work, there lay a purely materialistic outlook. The king and nobles are powerless against the people, he says, and the English commons are treacherous and cruel. Englishmen will have no sleepy king; they would sooner kill half a hundred in succession, in order to have a ruler to their liking. They delight in battles and slaughter, for the country is richer in times of war than in times of peace. In his opinion there is no people under the sun more difficult to deal with or more changeable; although they are genial and good-mannered, no one who is wise will put much faith in them.[2]

Now that feelings of patriotism were being aroused in France, we find Froissart's opinion of the English repeated by other writers. Christine de Pisan, in recommending her son to the Duke of Orleans,

likewise refers to England as the wicked country where the people are " changeable ".

> Ja trois ans a que pour sa grant prouesse
> L'en amena le conte très louable
> De Salsbery, qui mourut a detresse
> Ou mal pais d'Angleterre, ou muable
> Y sont la gent.

Philippe de Commines has also occasion to tell his fellow-countrymen what he thought of the English, and although reputed for his perspicacious judgments on men and events, he has nothing to add to the comments of his predecessor. " The King of England ", says Commines, " cannot enter upon war without the consent of his Parliament; and when Parliament is assembled the king asks for aid from his subjects, for no subsidies are levied in England except to wage war on France or Scotland; and Parliament willingly grants these subsidies, especially for war with France." Elsewhere he states that the English, nobles, commons and clergy, are ever ready to attack France under the pretext of some quarrel or other, in the hope of conquest, for God allowed their predecessors to win many great battles and large possessions in the kingdom, whence they carried off much wealth and booty to England.[1]

Froissart had had life-long associations of a friendly nature with England, and might well have been excused if he had withheld criticism of a country in which he had so many patrons whom he so frankly admired; it is a sure mark therefore of his insight and independence of judgment when he anticipates almost word for word the views of that shrewd politician of the fifteenth century, who as counsellor and friend of Louis XI, was on a very different footing with

regard to this country. Those who are not disposed to admit that Froissart was ever capable of personal criticism explain his remarks as the outcome of the feelings of horror aroused in him by the dethronement and death of Richard II.[1] His associations with the Black Prince, Richard's father, and with Edward, his grandfather, to say nothing of his presence at Bordeaux, where he was called upon to record the birth of the future king, would in fact easily account for such feelings, but the king's end only strengthened an opinion which he had formed many years earlier, for already in the Second Book, written twenty years before Richard's deposition, he states :

> I remind you that the English are naturally envious of others' possessions and always have been. You must know that the King of England and his uncles were greatly annoyed at the profit and honour which fell to the King and nobles of France at the battle of Rosebecque ; and the English knights said : " Ah ! By the Holy Virgin ! What a fuss these French are now making over this crowd of villains they have massacred. Would to God that Philippe d'Arteveldt had had from us two thousand lances and six thousand archers ! Not one of these Frenchmen would have escaped and all would have been killed or taken ; and, by God ! they shall not boast long of their glory ".[2]

As for his opinion of Richard, this is in no wise biased by his sympathy for the king's fate : he frequently refers to the bad plight of the country under his " poor government " :

> Merchants dared not ride abroad for their business from fear of being robbed, and they could complain to no one who would do them justice. These things were greatly displeasing to the people of England, . . . for in England merchants and labourers are accustomed to live in peace and to carry on their trade unmolested, and labourers are wont to live in ease and abundance on the produce of the seasons. . . .

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BATTLE IN THE STREETS OF CIRENCESTER IN THE YEAR 1400.

[*face p.* 126.

With this state of things the chronicler contrasts the condition of the country in the time of Edward, when no man dared take a chicken or a sheep without paying for it; yet Richard was bent upon pleasure and did not trouble what happened, provided he could do as he liked. Finally we read that the citizens of London declared that a king who governs a nation must have enough sense and discretion to distinguish between good and evil, otherwise he is not worthy to rule. Froissart's sympathy for Richard, therefore, does not induce him to suppress the opinion that he was not fit to be a king.

Such is the general attitude of Froissart towards the people and events that figure in his chronicle. We can now form a more adequate picture of his times by examining his portrayal of the two classes: the knights, to whom his work is mainly devoted, and the commons, who, whether the chronicler liked it or not, could now no longer be neglected, even by a court and military historian.

IX

THE CHIVALRY OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY[1]

FROISSART's age is often described as the most brilliant period in the annals of chivalry, but no serious historian would now advance such a statement without some qualification. Chivalry, as Professor Hearnshaw has recently shown,[2] has been defined in the most varied fashion, and it is not surprising that widely divergent views have been expressed as to the age in which it is to be found in its highest form. We have only to compare the works of different historians of chivalry to realise that the term is made to cover ideals and aspirations which changed considerably during the four or five centuries of their history. Thus, for the French historian, Léon Gautier,[3] chivalry was "at its height" during that primitive period which saw the birth of the epic poem, and for this authority its dominant feature was the religious heroism which formed the chief source of inspiration of these early poets. For others, however, and amongst these we must reckon the distinguished English authority W. P. Ker,[4] chivalry is associated with the gallantry of Romance, which flourished at a later age. This difference of opinion, which leaves us to decide whether religion or earthly love is to be considered as the chief basis of chivalry, seems strange at first sight, but it is easily explained: both views

result from a too restricted definition of the term, which ignores the fact that whereas a word may remain unchanged, its content adapts itself to changing conditions of life and to different forms of civilisation.

The first phase of chivalry reflects the religious aspirations of the early crusading period. The ideals of these times are depicted in the hero of the Chanson de Geste, and particularly in Roland, who throughout the Middle Ages was looked upon as the perfect image of a knight. Courageous to the point of foolhardiness, Roland yields to none in physical courage, but the feature of his character which is most emphasised by the poet is his devotion to the cause of Charlemagne, and that cause is the cause of the Christian faith. Charlemagne is God's agent here on earth; he is under God's special protection: the angel Gabriel keeps watch by his bed and warns him of approaching danger. God works miracles on his behalf: when Charlemagne marches against the pagans to avenge the death of Roland the sun stands still in the heavens, as for the prophet Joshua. The sanctity of Charlemagne's mission moreover is symbolised by his sword Joyeuse: in its hilt are fragments of the sacred lance—the lance that had pierced Christ's side, and was finally discovered by the early Crusaders, when it created such a great sensation in Europe. Similarly, Roland's sword Durendal, which the Emperor gave his nephew at God's command, contained a fragment of the Holy Virgin's raiment and other sacred relics. Then again, before the conflict with the Saracens, Archbishop Turpin addresses Roland's assembled barons and prepares them for battle; with stirring words, words which were once echoed with such an amazing effect throughout the whole of Europe, he appeals to their

devotion to the emperor and to the cause of the Christian Faith. "Barons," he says, "Charles gave us this task; we must die for our king. Christendom is in peril, lend it your aid; you will now have battle, for you see the Saracens before you; confess your sins and ask God for pardon; I will absolve you to save your souls; if you die, you will be Holy Martyrs and will win a place in Paradise the Great." Whereupon, in a pious scene, which reminds us of similar episodes in the early crusades, these primitive warriors fall on their knees and are blessed in God's name by the Archbishop, who bids them smite the enemy for their penance.

The same religious spirit which we find in Roland also pervades the early Chronicles. The knights of St. Louis, during the crusades in Egypt and Syria, shirked no hardship and suffering in the name of religion. Poets had promised them Paradise for their reward:

> Ki ore irat od Loovis
> Ja mar d'enfern avrat poour
> Char s'alme en iert en pareïs
> od les angles nostre Seigneur,

and they accepted their lot with unflinching faith. When, some years earlier, one of these knights had been fighting against Germans, he had prayed to God, we learn from Joinville,[1] to have pity upon him and to deliver him from that war against Christians in order that he might die in His service and so win the Kingdom of Paradise. Another passage of the same work tells us of a valiant man, Lord James Castel, Bishop of Soissons: "when he saw that the French were retreating towards Damietta, he, who had a great desire to be with God, felt no wish to return to the

country where he was born, so he hastened to be with God and set his spurs to his horse and fell single-handed upon the Turks, who killed him with their swords and thus put him in God's companionship and amongst the number of the martyrs". Almost every page of Joinville's *Memoirs* bears evidence of this spirit of self-sacrifice for the cause of religion.

Subsequently, with the decline of religious enthusiasm which marks the history of the later crusades, another and a less stern ideal established itself in the code of the knight, that of human love and service to women. A poem of Conon de Bethune, one of the leaders of the fourth crusade, shows how the sentiments of even a twelfth century warrior could be divided. The poet does not question a knight's duty: he knows that all who go yonder will win life immortal, yet he grieves at his departure; his sorrow is caused by the thought of his lady whom he is leaving, and if his body is going to serve the Lord, his heart remains in the keeping of his mistress:

> Ahi! Amours con dure departie
> Me convendra faire de la meillor
> Ki onques fust amee ne servie,
> Deus me ramaint a li par sa douçour
> Si voirement que m'en part a doulour.
> Las! qu'ai je dit? ja ne m'en part je mie:
> se li cors vait servir Nostre Seignour,
> Li cuers remaint del tout en sa baillie.[1]

We have here a sentiment which is almost unknown in the earliest phase of chivalry. In the earliest literature of France the knight is intent only on the pursuit of war and is so indifferent to the charms of the fair sex that he will turn aside from his mistress's embrace, declaring that he has more important things to do:

Elle parla con ja pourrés oïr :
Baisiés moi, sire, pour Dieu qui ne menti :
Plus le desir que riens que Dieus fesist.
Et dist Berniers : J'an ai molt grant desir
Mais de baisier n'est il mie or loisir.
Quant je serai arier a Saint Quentin,
La vos vaurai manoier et tenir.[1]

" These warriors ", it has been said, " thought less of a beautiful woman than of a good lance-thrust or a fine charger."[2] Woman, in fact, was so little esteemed that the poet had no fear of shocking his audience by telling how a lord would beat his wife, for the practice was recognised by law in medieval times. Even in the *Song of Roland*, which has given us the pathetic figure of the beautiful Aude, the heroine plays a relatively unimportant part, and when Roland in his dying hour thinks of the things most dear to him, his overlord, his family, his country and his religion, he has no thought for his betrothed, who will lose consciousness and die on hearing of her lover's fate.

The change in the attitude towards women took place about the middle of the twelfth century, as we have already noted, and was first seen at the more refined court of Marie de Champagne. Henceforth the aristocratic literature of France is addressed more especially to ladies. Poets, imitating the southern troubadours, now sing the perfections of their mistresses, crave their pity and seek to merit their grace. The knight now fights to win his lady's favour ; Mars and Venus are united, and by the time Froissart composed his *Chronicles* the word *amoureux* had come to mean not only the lover but also the general virtues of the knight, and the idea prevailed that no man could be a perfect knight who was not a perfect lover.

It is this blending of gallantry with the older elements of chivalry that characterises the knight of the Hundred Years' War. Whatever may have been his true reason for fighting, his only avowed motive was the love of his lady, which was the formula that usually accompanied the challenge to combat. All the heroes of the age have a mistress in the background, who uplifts them to deeds of valour. It was Love, if we are to believe the poets, that first inflamed the courage of Duguesclin, the great French captain:

> Premierement pour Amour fut armé,
> Ce disoit-il, et desir d'estre aimé
> Le fist vaillant.[1]

Boucicault, his contemporary, was no less indebted to the same influence, according to his biographer: "Boucicault had indeed arrived at the age when Love naturally demands toll of all noble hearts, and it was only right that he should not be exempt. In our time we have seen many a noble man whom Love's service has rendered valiant".

But the most striking example of the kind of Romance that appealed to Froissart's contemporaries is the chronicler's account of the love of King Edward III for the Countess of Salisbury. Obviously the greatest hero of the age must conform to the general rule! and it is to be noted that the chronicler embodies in his story all the conventional formulæ of the poets.[2] "Thus did King Edward debate within himself. At one minute he was melancholy, at another joyous. First Honour and Loyalty would reproach him for harbouring such falseness in his heart as to wish to dishonour the good knight, the Earl of Salisbury, who had always served him loyally. Then Love would assail him and persuade him—so great was his ardour

—that to be enamoured of such a noble, beautiful and gentle lady, he being king and she his subject, was no crime or dishonour; for he himself had made the knight what he was, and he was to be trusted more than any other man in the realm. Moreover, if he was in love, it was good for him, for his kingdom, and for all knights and squires, for he would be happier, more joyful, and would order more jousts, more tournaments, more feastings and revellings than ever, and he would be more capable and vigorous in his wars, more lovable to his people, and more cruel to his enemies. Such are the king's thoughts: first, he says that he is committing a folly and that the lady is far from thinking of him and would sooner suffer death than anything which would bring shame and dishonour upon her. Then said the king: 'Now, maybe that she will not deign to love me, yet I will think of her and love her in all purity, for the thought of her brings good to me'."

The same theme inspires one of Froissart's finest passages, the description of Edward's love-making over a game of chess. This, curiously enough, is in complete accordance with an old tradition of Romance, in which chess had served to bring together many lovers, including Lancelot and Guinevere and Tristan and Iseut. The king has just saved the Countess from the Scots, who were besieging her castle; the situation therefore is extremely delicate, for the Countess does not wish to appear ungrateful, and yet has to parry the advances of her royal guest:

> And he remained in the castle with the Countess, and hoped that before his departure he would receive from her a more favourable answer than he had yet received. So he asked for chessmen, and the Countess ordered them to be brought. Then the King begged her to play with him, and

she gladly consented, for she wished to be as hospitable as possible. And with good reason, for the King had rendered her a great service in raising the siege of the Scots from before her castle. . . .

When the chessmen arrived, the King, who wished to leave some possession of his with the Countess, challenged her, saying: "My lady, what stakes will you play?" And the Countess replied: "And you, Sire?" Then the King placed on the table a very fine ring, set with a large ruby, which he was wearing on his finger. The Countess said: "Sire, Sire, I have no ring as valuable as that". "Lady," said the King, "put down such as you have, it is indeed good enough."

The Countess, to please the King, took from her finger a gold ring, which was not of great worth. Then they played at chess together, the Countess playing as well as she could, in order that the King should not consider her too simple and ignorant; and the King made wrong moves, and did not play as well as he might. And there was scarce a pause between the moves but he looked so hard at the Countess that she lost countenance and fumbled her game. And when the King saw that she had lost a knight, a rook, or whatever it might be, he lost too to keep the Countess in play.

They played until the King lost and was checkmate. Then the lady rose and asked for wine and spices, for it seemed that the King wished to take his leave. And she took her ring and put it on her finger, hoping that the King too would take his; and she offered it him, saying: "Sire, it is not fitting that in my house I should take something belonging to you; you ought rather to take something of mine". "Yes, indeed," said the King, "for the game has decided it; if I had won, I assure you that I would have taken yours." The lady preferred not to press the King further, but she came to one of her maids, and gave her the ring, and said to her: "When you see that the King has gone from here and taken leave of me and is about to mount his horse, go to him and give him back his ring, and tell him that I do not wish to keep it, for it does not belong to me". Thereupon spices and wines were brought, but the King refused to partake of them before the Countess, nor would the Countess be served before the King; and they argued and bantered for a long time. Finally, to cut the matter short, it was agreed that they should both partake together. When this was done and the knights had all drunk, the King took leave of the Countess, and

said in a loud voice, to divert suspicion: "Lady, you remain here in your castle, and I go to follow my enemies". The Countess, at these words, curtseyed low before the King. And the King took her openly by the hand, and pressed it a little as a sign of love, and it was a great comfort to him. And the King noticed that the knights and ladies were all occupied in taking leave of one another, and he came forward and said just two words: "My dear lady, I commend you to God till my return, I beg you to take thought and be of a different mind". "Dear lord," replied the lady, "may God guide you and take from you these dishonourable thoughts, for I am, and always will be, of a mind to serve you to your honour and to mine."

Thereupon the King left the room and the Countess also, who accompanied him to the hall where his palfrey was waiting. The King then said that he would not mount while the Countess was there; so the Countess took leave of the King and his knights and returned to her apartment with her maids. Just as the King was mounting, the lady who had been instructed by the Countess came to him and knelt before him; and when the King saw her he raised her quickly, thinking that she had come for some different matter. Then she said: "My lord, here is your ring which my lady returns to you, begging you humbly that you will not consider her discourteous, for she does not want to keep it in her possession. She is so beholden to you in other ways, that she is ever bound, she says, to be your servant". The King when he heard the lady speak thus, and saw his ring which she was holding, and heard the wishes and excuses of the Countess, was dumbfounded. Nevertheless, with prompt decision, in order that the ring should remain there as he had desired, replied briefly, for there was no time for any words, and said: "Mistress, since your lady does not like the small prize she won from me, let it remain in your keeping".

Having thus spoken, he mounted quickly and rode from the castle.

At the beginning of the Hundred Years' War many English knights could be seen in France wearing a patch over one eye. They had vowed to their ladies that they would not remove this patch but would see with one eye only until they had achieved some feat of arms in France. Their ladies, left in England, had

likewise vowed that they would take no man for spouse, whether duke, count, prince or marquis, before their betrothed had accomplished that which he had undertaken for the sake of Love :

> Et quant il revenra, s'il en escape vifs,
> Li mien corps li ottroye, de bon cœur a toudis.[1]

Horace Walpole, quoting this passage to a lady friend, obviously agrees that some illusion of the sort is good for a man, when he adds : " Is it not plain, Madam, that we were greater heroes when we were in love and hoodwinked, than now that we have no sentiment and have our eyes broad open ? "[2]

From North to South of Europe, in all the court circles which the chronicler frequented, nothing appealed more than these stories of " arms and love ".[3] They were the chief themes of intercourse at Westminster as well as amongst the knights and ladies who paraded the halls of the palace of Gaston de Foix. Apart therefore from their human interest they are a striking testimony to the manners of fourteenth century society.

The following is a typical example of the way in which arms and love were associated. During the siege of Rennes by the Duke of Lancaster, an English knight approached the walls of the town with some partridges he had taken in the fields, and asked to speak with Duguesclin, who commanded the defence. The Englishman was accosted at the gates by Olivier de Mauni, who asked whether he would give or sell the partridges for the ladies of the town. The Englishman challenged the Frenchman to fight for them. Olivier needed no second bidding ; fully armed as he was, he forded the moat and the conflict started beneath the walls of the town in sight of both

armies and of the ladies of Rennes, who looked on with delight from the battlements. Olivier de Mauni finally overcame his adversary; he then led him, whether he liked it or not, across the moat and into the city, and there he presented him to the ladies, together with the partridges.

The sequel of the story is no less entertaining. The victor had been wounded in the duel and required certain herbs to heal his wounds. So he called his prisoner and promised him that he would give him his liberty if he would procure for him a safe-conduct which would allow him to leave the town for a month. The English knight accordingly came to the Duke, who, with many a taunt about the partridges, granted the Frenchman's request. Olivier was then richly entertained in the English camp and was visited daily by Lancaster's own surgeons, and when at last he was cured and took leave of his host the latter presented him with silver plate and gave him messages for the ladies of Rennes, expressing the wish that they might often have partridges.

It was thus that Froissart's contemporaries would read Romance into any conduct they thought worthy of admiration. During the siege of Africa the French observed in the ranks of the Saracens a young Moorish knight who rode a fresh and prancing steed, which was light to the touch and seemed to fly through the air. All his accoutrements were black, apart from his white turban, and he generally carried three feathered and pointed javelins, which he handled with skill. The Christians, we are told, concluded that his deeds of prowess were inspired by his love for a lady of his nation, the daughter of the King of Tunis, a most beautiful lady, according to the reports of

some Genoese merchants who had seen her in the town of Tunis. The chronicler adds that during the siege of the town the young French knights took great pleasure in beholding the deeds he performed for the love of his lady, and often tried to capture him, but the young Moor was too well mounted, and too skilful a rider to allow himself to be taken.

Another of Froissart's heroes who is usually associated with these stories of gallantry is John de Bonne-Lance. John was a great favourite with the ladies and damsels of the town of Montferrand, who were anxious to set eyes on an Englishman.[1] "I will tell you", said one of these ladies, "why I would gladly set eyes on an Englishman. I have been told that they are valiant men-at-arms, as valiant as the men of our country, or more so; and they perform great feats of prowess and take from us towns and castles and keep possession of them." And the knight replied: "By our God, good lady, if I am fortunate enough to capture one who is worthy that you should see him, I will bring him to you". And the knight was as good as his word, for a month later he brought back his prisoners to the town, and was richly fêted by the ladies, who came to see him "more than twenty-seven times", in his hotel.

Religion, it is true, still remained the foremost article in the formal code of a knight, although it seems seldom to have furnished the mainspring of action as in the crusading period. In his poem *Le Temple d'Honneur*, in which Froissart sets forth in didactic manner the duties of a knight and his lady, he is distinctly more serious than in the many stories of gallantry which he relates for our admiration and amusement in the *Chronicles*. The knight's first

obligation, he says, is to obey the commands of the Church; he must attend Mass and confess devoutly, and serve God in fear, remembering that Paradise is more important than the glory of this world. Like many a poet of the two preceding centuries, he adds that to his friends a knight must be courteous and gentle as a maiden, but that when he dons the bassinet he must be brave and daring and worthy of his race; he must beware of evil counsellors, and before embarking on an undertaking he should ask the advice of wise men. At times, however, the note is more original, as when he states that the knight must employ his leisure, when men think he is resting, in reading and studying the wisdom of his ancestors. Nor does he forget to warn the lady also of her duties: she must be courtly, wise, discreet, devout and, above all, charitable, for there is no richer cloak than that of charity:

> Vous ne poés plus riche cote
> Vestir voir que de carité.

That the investiture still retained its religious character we see from the contemporary description of the ceremony given us by the Monk of St. Denis, who relates the knighting of the King of Sicily and Charles his brother by Charles VI in 1388. On their arrival at the abbey of St. Denis the two princes had first to bathe as a mark of their purity and were then led to the altar to pass the night in prayer, according to ancient usage. The following morning Mass was celebrated by the bishop. Two squires from the King's bodyguard, each carrying by the point a naked sword, on the pommel of which were hanging golden spurs, entered the church by the door of the cloister, and behind them walked the King,

accompanied by the King of Sicily and his brother. When they had taken their places before the altar they awaited the arrival of the Queens of France and Sicily, and mass was then sung by order of the King. At the end of mass the bishop came forward and the two princes knelt and asked to be admitted to the Order of Knighthood. Finally, when they had taken the oath, the King belted on their swords and ordered one of his knights to fasten on their spurs, and the bishop pronounced the benediction.

We have usually the impression, however, that religion was only a traditional formula for the knight of the fourteenth century. We seldom hear of that religious enthusiasm which inspired the early crusaders Many an expedition was started simply to provide an occupation for the nobles who were at a loose end in times of peace. "Why", says Froissart, "do knights sacrifice their wealth, leave their children and families and embark upon distant expeditions?" It is not to win a place in Paradise, as the poets of the twelfth century would have told us, but to acquire fame:

> Pourquoi travaillent li seigneur
> Et despendent foison dou leur
> Ens es lointains pelerinages,
> Et laissent enfans et linages,
> Femmes, possessions et terre,
> Fors seul que pour loenge acquerre?[1]

or, as he says still more explicitly in the *Chronicles*, "as the falcon, which for a long time has rested, desires to fly, so knights and squires desire feats of arms for their advancement". Nor do we hear of any desire to win Paradise. "These soldiers", we are told, "bother little about pardons, except in their dying hour." When we read the accounts of the

crusades of the fourteenth century we find ourselves forced to agree with Count Albert of Bavaria, who sought to dissuade his son from embarking on one of these expeditions with the remark that the knight's only motive for fighting was to win the vain glory of this world. This is seen especially in the chronicler's description of the crusade against the Moors of Africa. The Genoese desired this war purely for commercial reasons, and they sent ambassadors to France to gain assistance, for as there was then a truce between England and France they knew that many knights, "having nothing else to do", would be pleased to join them. The French knights, on receiving this invitation, much rejoiced at the prospect of "winning honour", and informed the envoys that they could depend upon their assistance "in their praiseworthy desire to extend the Christian faith". When, after the arrival of the crusaders in Africa, the Saracens desired to know on what grounds war had been declared against them, the Christians replied that it was because their ancestors had crucified and put to death the Son of God, called Jesus Christ, the true Prophet, without any cause or just reason. But the Saracens were better versed in religious history and received the answer with derision, Froissart informs us, and sent word to the French that they made assertions without proof, seeing that it was the Jews and not the Saracens, who had crucified Christ.

If, in spite of this weakening of the religious element, chivalry was still a magnificent ideal, it was largely due to the sentiment of honour which it inculcated in the knight, and to the knight's desire to earn the approbation of his fellows, an incentive which would then be all the stronger, as the world of the

fourteenth century was comparatively small and reputations were international. "The reputation for valour is so high and so noble, and its effect so brilliant and fine, that it shines resplendent in halls and places where lords assemble in great concourse, and stands out beyond all others." It was often proclaimed that honour was of more importance than victory, as in the well known passage (which we owe to Jehan le Bel) describing the manner in which the Black Prince entertained his royal prisoner, King John, to supper, on the evening following the battle of Poitiers :

> And the prince served before the king's table as humbly as he could, and would not sit with the king, however much the king desired him to do so, but said repeatedly that he was not worthy to sit at table with so great a prince and so valiant a man as the king was and had shown himself to be that day. And on bended knee he said to the king : "Sir, for God's sake, make no evil cheer, although God to-day has not accomplished your will ; for certainly the king my father will accord you as much honour and friendship as is in his power, and will make terms with you so reasonably that you shall ever after be friends. And, sir, I think you ought to rejoice, although the battle has not proceeded to your liking, for you have won to-day the high renown of prowess, and have surpassed in valour all others on your side. Sir, I say this not to mock you, for all of our party, who saw every man's deeds, agree in this and give you the prize and chaplet, if you will deign to wear it". Thereupon all began to murmur, and Englishmen and Frenchmen said amongst themselves that the prince had spoken nobly and fittingly, and agreed that he would prove a noble lord, if God preserved his life to persevere in such good fortune.

One often reads of a spirit of generosity and fair play in battle which we in the twentieth century could never emulate, except on the playing field. It is the spirit exemplified by Victor Hugo, when in the *Légende des Siècles*, to recall the age of chivalry, he relates the combat between Roland and Olivier.

Roland, having disarmed his adversary, refuses to follow up his advantage, for he considers that such an act would be unworthy of his rank; so he bids his opponent send for another sword and a sword of a better temper. The scene is typical of many an episode related by Froissart. Whilst Edward was beseiging Rheims in 1360, a party of English knights laid siege to the castle of Cormicy in the neighbourhood. Unable to take it by assault, they brought a number of miners from Liège and ordered them to mine under the fortress. The shaft was constructed under the moat as far as the main tower of the keep and was supported with stays. When this was done the beseigers asked to parley with the French captain and called upon him to surrender, as he valued his life. The French knight laughed on hearing this summons, and replied that they were all quite well within the fortress and there was no lack of stores, nor could they believe that the castle, which was built of good stone and wood, was in danger of falling. In the end, however, the defenders consented to come out, whereupon the miners set fire to the stays, and the main tower, splitting in two, crashed into the moat. "Now behold," said the Englishman to the French, "and see whether I spoke the truth." And the French replied: "Yes, Sire, we are your prisoners, and we thank you for your courtesy; the peasants who recently ruled in this country, if they had had the upper hand of us as you had a moment ago, would never have acted as you have done."

The unlimited confidence placed in an adversary's word of honour explains the success of the strategem of John of Norwich, the defender of Angoulême.[1] Having decided that further resistance would be

useless he appeared on the battlements and signalled to the beseigers that he wished to parley. The Duke of Normandy, the French captain, came up in person, and the Englishman, after an exchange of greetings, demanded a truce for the following day to celebrate the Feast of the Purification. The Duke, suspecting nothing, agreed. But the following morning John of Norwich and his companions donned their armour, saddled their horses, opened the gates and marched out of the town. When the French brought news to the Duke that the English were leaving, he replied: "Let them go where they will; we cannot force them to stay: I will keep my promise to them". So John of Norwich and his band marched unmolested through the French army.

But the most pleasing feature of these wars was the treatment of prisoners. When an adversary was conquered he was treated "like a brother", to use Froissart's words, and was allowed to return to his home till a given date, when he reappeared to pay his ransom. It was contrary to the laws of courtesy moreover to fix the ransom at such a high figure that it meant ruin to the knight, or prevented him from maintaining his estate. Sometimes, indeed, the prisoner was asked to state the price he could pay, as in the case of Duguesclin, when he was captured by the Black Prince: it was when the Prince expressed surprise at the enormous sum of one hundred thousand francs which the French captain said he would pay that Duguesclin made his famous reply that not a woman in France who could spin would spare her labour to contribute to his ransom. Such was the etiquette of the day, and all who failed to comply with it are severely criticised. Froissart complains bitterly

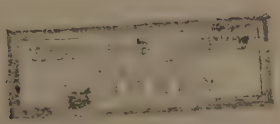
of the Germans for this reason: it were better, he says repeatedly, for a nobleman to be captured by a Saracen unbeliever than to fall in the hands of the Germans, for they keep their prisoners in chains and torture them to extort large sums from them, and he considers that no man should consent to bear arms with them.

The code of honour, according to the standards of chivalry, left little room for the ways of diplomacy. When, at the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War, the Duke of Brabant was "swimming between two waters", as the chronicler says, he sent an envoy to the King of France to persuade him that he would never be anything but a true Frenchman, whilst at the same time he was negotiating an alliance with Edward. The envoy, Louis de Cranehem, convinced of his master's good faith, fulfilled his mission as a man of honour. Subsequently, however, he heard of the Duke's alliance with England, and was then so overcome with the ignominious part he had been called upon to play that he "fell into a great melancholy" and died of grief. Such sensitiveness, we must admit, was exceptional: self-interest, backed by diplomacy, was rapidly replacing the medieval sentiment of honour, and in the following century chivalric principles had so completely succumbed to Macchiavellian doctrines that Commines, the counsellor of Louis XI, asserts as his maxim that honour is always on the side of the winner.[1]

We are often reminded in the *Chronicles* of the principle that a battle should be fought under equal conditions, but we generally find that this principle was only advanced by the party who were at a disadvantage, and although an army encamped on a hill

was often invited to come down to the plain to fight, it never chose to abandon its position. It seems somewhat humorous to us to-day that Edward, when encamped in his strong position in front of Calais, should receive a deputation from Philip pointing out that the French were unable to approach the English lines, and requesting that both sides should take counsel together to choose a ground for fighting, and it is not surprising to us that Edward declined the invitation. But the challenge in due form generally preceded a battle, which was fixed for so many days ahead. When, for example, the English and French armies met at Buironfosse, in 1339, Edward sent a herald, who was well versed in French, to the King of France to settle the day for battle; the herald was well received, and when he had executed his mission the King of France presented him with rich fur mantles to reward him for the good news he had brought. Such tactics, however, had obvious disadvantages when there was a possibility of one side changing its mind, for in this instance, after both armies had been standing at Buironfosse for a whole day in full battle array, the French king finally decided not to fight.

As the stirring story of the conduct of James Audley at Poitiers shows, a knight imbued with the chivalric code thought his honour at stake if he accepted anything but a foremost place in battle. At times, indeed, it was difficult to persuade a captain that it was equally important to have a good leader in command of the reserves. It was against a prejudice of this kind that John Chandos had to contend at Auray: when Hugh of Caverley was assigned to the rearguard he strongly protested and prayed with clasped hands that



another might be put there in his stead, and it was only when Chandos, with tears in his eyes, declared that he himself must in that case take command of the reserves that Hugh finally consented.[1] Often the coveted place in the vanguard was allotted to newly created knights, as at the battle of Aljubarotta, when the King of Portugal, addressing sixty knights whom he had just invested, declared :

> Dear lords, the order of chivalry is so noble and lofty that no knight should allow baseness or cowardice to enter his heart ; but he must be proud and bold as a lion when once he has donned the helmet and stands face to face with his enemies ; and because I wish to-day that you should show prowess as you ought, I am sending you to the foremost place in battle. Now acquit yourselves so that you win honour, for otherwise you do not deserve your spurs.[2]

It was an easy matter, of course, for courage such as this to degenerate into foolhardiness, which is criticised at times even by contemporaries. Froissart, like Jehan le Bel, condemns the folly of the knights of the Noble Order of the Star, who advanced recklessly to an ambush laid by the English in Brittany. This Order, we are told, had been recently founded by King John, after the manner of the Round Table. It was to consist of three hundred of the most valiant knights of the realm of France, and each year the king was to hold a full court of all its members, when each was to relate the adventures, glorious or otherwise, which he had encountered ; and the king was to appoint two or three clerks to record these adventures, when the court would decide upon the most valiant and the most deserving of honour. None could enter this company who was not valiant and without reproach, and all had to swear that they would never

flee from battle. The Noble Order, however, only survived for one year: all were discomfited and killed in their first encounter with the English, although had it not been for their oath, they might have retreated. This, adds Froissart, was the last that was heard of the Order.

One quality which chroniclers never failed to praise in a knight was his devotion to those around him, to overlord or to vassal. It is on this head that Joinville is most enthusiastic in his praise of St. Louis, who throughout the Middle Ages was admired for the self-sacrifice with which he served his people, in small as well as in greater matters. This is a favourite theme with Froissart, and it has inspired some of his best pages. One of the most striking is his description of the death of the blind King of Bohemia,[1] who, led by his knights, rushed into the midst of the fray at Cressy, where his body was found on the following day, surrounded by his bodyguard who had shared his fate; in their anxiety not to be separated from their lord they had fastened together the bridles of their horses. In the conduct of James Audley at Poitiers, on the other hand, we have an example of a knight's sense of obligation to his subordinates. This knight, who had been the first to assault the enemy and had fought in the front rank of the English army throughout the battle, when carried back on a stretcher at the end of the day, was promised by the Black Prince a pension of five hundred marks for his gallant conduct. On reaching his own quarters James forthwith summoned the knights of his lineage and formally made over the money to the four squires who had served him as bodyguard, with the words:

> My lords, it has pleased the Prince to give me five hundred marks as a yearly revenue; I have done little to merit this gift, and I cannot hope to do much more. These four squires have always served me loyally, and to-day especially, the honour bestowed upon me was won by their enterprise and daring. Therefore in the presence of you, who are of my lineage, I now wish to thank them for the great services they have rendered me. My intention is to give them the five hundred marks which the Prince awarded me, in the same manner that he gave them to me.

Obviously these stories of heroism and self-sacrifice are not intended to reflect the average conduct of the fourteenth century warrior; it is probable indeed that we should never have heard of them had they not presented a certain relief against a more sombre background. Furthermore, only the reader with a very imperfect knowledge of the *Chronicles* would accuse Froissart of painting only the more brilliant side of contemporary life, for his stories of gallantry can easily be matched by equally numerous scenes of ruthless barbarity. We have only to read his accounts of public executions to realise how insensitive was his age to physical suffering. We can imagine nothing more gruesome, for instance, than the spectacle which was afforded the public when Hugh Despenser was executed at Hereford. After being dragged through the streets to the music of trumpets he was brought to the market-place, where a big fire had been kindled in full view of a large concourse of people. The victim was then bound to a stake, so that all could see him, and then, piece by piece, his body was dismembered; his heart removed and flung into the fire, his head cut off and sent to the City of London, and his four quarters despatched to the principal towns. After describing this scene, the chronicler, unmoved by such a barbarous episode, calmly

continues to relate the Queen's journey to London, and the feasting with which her arrival was celebrated.

An age which could endure such spectacles without flinching was bound to fall short in the application of the principles of chivalry to the methods of war. Froissart himself provides us with a list of horrors, which, however much they stain the annals of chivalry, must nevertheless be borne in mind if we wish to form a true conception of his contemporaries. Against the inspiriting account of Otterburn, so rich in chivalrous colouring, we must set the sacking of Durham by King David, in 1342, when "men and women, priests and monks, canons and small children" who had taken refuge in the church were all burnt, so that in the city of Durham there remained "neither man, woman nor child, neither house nor church—for all was destroyed".

Few leaders amongst Froissart's contemporaries escape the condemnation of cruelty. Edward's destruction of Caen, the Black Prince's sacking of Limoges, both arouse the chronicler's indignation. "'There is no heart so hard", he says of the latter event, "which, if it remembered God, would not weep piteously at the havoc there wrought; for more than three thousand persons, men, women and children, were destroyed there that day. May their souls be with God, for they were truly martyrs."

When leaders were capable of such brutal acts we must not expect better conduct from the rank and file. After the retreat of the French in 1340, a number of "light companions" proceeded from Valenciennes to the French camp, where they found stores and provisions which had been left and a few tents in which were still a number of brigands and Genoese in a state

of drunken sleep. They set fire to the camp and burnt its inmates. When the latter were awakened by the heat and tried to get out they were driven back with planks and sticks. One who managed to escape was seized by the arms and legs and hurled back into the fire.[1]

Then again, in spite of the code of chivalry, there seems to have been but a thin dividing line between the exploits of the knight and the excesses of the bands of brigands who infested the country from Poitiers onwards. These brigands were mercenaries who joined up with either army in times of war but subsisted on the inhabitants when no other employment was offered them. Froissart describes their tactics. They would watch a good house or castle, enter it at daybreak and set fire to it, causing panic amongst the inmates, who would think themselves attacked by a force of a thousand armed men. The brigands would then pillage the house, and, in the case of a castle, would imprison the lord, pending payment of ransom. They themselves would take possession of the castle, whence they would plunder the surrounding country. Many of these brigands became enormously rich. A certain Bacon, having exacted from a rich victim a ransom of twenty thousand crowns, subsequently won the king's favour and became usher-at-arms at court. Another, named Croquart, amassed a fortune of sixty thousand crowns and was offered a knighthood and a rich marriage if he would throw in his lot with the French cause.

Because Froissart himself refers to these events as "marvels" he has been accused of admiring the conduct of these villains no less than the chivalrous exploits to which he often applies the same term.

But the word "marvel" for him, it is to be noted, does not always imply admiration; in a passage of the Third Version, which has too often been overlooked, he strongly condemns the laxity of the government which failed to suppress these bands at the outset:

> Although a truce had been made between the King of England and the King of France . . . yet many adventurous brigands and pillagers began to devastate the outlying provinces of France in districts where they knew that the knights were weak and unused to war, and seized towns and castles; for many such men of arms, Germans and others, assembled, and carried out their enterprises under cover of war, and no one opposed them. And some indeed said that they were secretly countenanced by the king's officers and knights and squires of the country they ravaged, and that these participated in their spoils. I tell you therefore that since all these feats of arms, schools of iniquity grew up and multiplied in France very abundantly owing to the immunity which they enjoyed at the outset.[1]

These and many other sidelights on the darker side of medieval conditions are, after all, no impeachment of the ideals of chivalry. Froissart's condemnation of most of the acts of which we ourselves would not approve, doubtless expresses public opinion of his day, and we can therefore assume that the code which poet and preacher had voiced for so many centuries, had very largely implanted itself in men's minds as the recognised standard of conduct.

It is not surprising if most readers prefer the more picturesque side of fourteenth century life, which is indeed the more characteristic, and, when reviewing the *Chronicles* from this standpoint, reference must naturally be made to some of the most brilliant scenes described by Froissart—his accounts of tournaments. When the knight was not campaigning, the joust or tournament was his chief pursuit, which not only provided an outlet for his martial spirit, enabling him

to win honour in the intervals between battles, but was also the great social event of the age, bringing together knights from all countries. During the Hundred Years' War, whenever there was a lull in hostilities, we read of a constant coming and going of knights across the Channel to take part in friendly tournaments in either England or France with the same men they had recently faced on the battlefield. Incidentally, too, the tournament was a great source of revenue for the successful knight, who carried off from the lists valuable prizes in horses and arms. At a somewhat earlier date, for instance, the Fabliaux depict for us a knight complaining of the prohibition of the tournament by the church, for he had thus been deprived of his sole means of livelihood.

One of the most complete descriptions of a tournament that have been handed down to us is Froissart's account of the jousts of St. Inglevert, which fills one of the longest chapters of the *Chronicles*. The modern reader can scarcely be expected to follow all the technical details of the encounters, but it is interesting at any rate to read the preparations made for the occasion, which give a general idea of the scene. Whilst Charles VI was staying at Montpellier, taking great pleasure in the company of the ladies of the town, three young noblemen, inflamed by this courtly society of ladies and damsels, issued a challenge, which was approved by the king, in the following terms:

> In our great desire to see and know the noble gentlemen, knights and squires of the borders of France as well as of far countries, we shall be at St. Inglevert the twentieth day of the month of May, and shall stay there thirty successive days, and on each of these days except Fridays, we shall deliver from their vows all manner of knights, squires, and gentle strangers, from no matter what country,

who choose to come for the breaking of five lances or rockets, whichever they choose, or both, if it pleases them. And outside our tents we will place our war shields and our peace shields, blazoned with our arms. And whoever would joust, let him come the day before and touch with a staff whichever he would choose. And if he touch the war shield he shall have on the following day mortal combat with the one whose shield he has touched; if he touch the peace shield he shall have the friendly tilt.

And all who come, or send to touch our shields must give their names to the persons appointed to the care of them. And all foreign knights and squires who would tilt with us shall bring with them a noble friend, who will order what may be proper to be done on either side and we will do the same on our parts.

And we beg all noble knights and squires who would accept our challenge not to think or imagine that we have undertaken this enterprise out of presumption, pride hatred, or ill-will, for our object is to have their honourable company and friendship, which we desire with all our hearts. And none of our shields shall be covered with iron or steel, and none of the shields of those who come to joust with us, and there shall be no manner of advantage, fraud, deception, or trickery, but all shall be ordered by those appointed on both sides to govern the jousts.

Another of Froissart's descriptions gives a glimpse of these events from the standpoint of the spectator, and shows the keenness of the onlookers and their anxiety on behalf of the combatants who, "to exalt their honour, expose their lives to the fortunes of one stroke". During the campaign in Portugal an English knight, Sir John Holland, was challenged by a Frenchman, in the name of "love and his lady", to single combat. The news of the encounter spread throughout the country, and the King and Queen of Portugal and all the ladies of their court decided to be present. After all had taken their places in the pavilion, the two knights appeared with "brisk and pretty demeanour", conscious that the eyes of a brilliant audience were upon them. They were

fighting with no blunted weapons, but with sharp well-tempered arms from Bordeaux. At the first encounter the Frenchman splintered his lance in four pieces, but Sir John Holland's thrust had no effect, for his adversary had fastened his helmet with one strap only, so that the blow simply removed the helmet, leaving him bare-headed. The English onlookers protested, declaring that this was not fair play: "Why is not his helm as fast buckled as Sir John Holland's is? We think he doth wrong". But they were silenced by John of Gaunt, who announced that the Englishman had only to adopt the same tactics, if he thought them to his advantage. So the tournament continued, amid general approbation.

We can complete these descriptions with the help of the miniatures illustrating these episodes in contemporary manuscripts, for the tournament was a favourite subject with the artist, and his rich representations of these brilliant scenes, his portrayal of the viziered emblasoned knights, the magnificently caparisoned steeds and the eager faces of the onlookers watching the combat from the pavilions, furnish a lively comment on the enthusiasm aroused by the tournament in medieval times.

The tournament survived for two or three centuries after Froissart's generation, and it was in this spectacular form that the age of chivalry was to draw to its close. Already during the Hundred Years' War there were signs of a change. Charles V scorned the chivalric tactics of his father John, who, like a hero of the *Chansons de Geste*, fought axe in hand at Poitiers. Charles the Wise preferred the tranquillity of the study to the turmoil of the battlefield, but nevertheless did more than any of his predecessors to weaken the force

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JOUSTS BETWEEN SIR JOHN HOLLAND AND SIR RENAUD DE ROYE AT BETANZOS.

[*face p.* 156.

of the English: for him the glory of battle was not worth the risk, and he preferred to reduce his enemy by intercepting his foraging parties and by seizing stragglers, never giving his adversary an opportunity to win successes which would make good his losses. His tactics were naturally unpopular at first with his nobles, who complained that it was shameful that the barons and knights of France should be forced to stand by while the country was overrun, but they were not long in winning favour, both in England and Spain. Moreover, the English successes in France had revealed the superiority of the archer, so detested in the literature of chivalry:

> Cent dehais ait qui archiers fu premier:
> Il fu couars, il n'osoit approchier.[1]

and very soon afterwards that keen observer, Philip de Commines, could say that it was not the knight, but the archer, who was the most important unit in battle.[2]

Finally, Froissart himself, who, more than any other, celebrated the alliance of Mars and Venus, is forced to admit that the union has its realistic and tragic side. When describing the preparations made in Hainault for the invasion of Frisia and the concourse of knights and squires and noblemen who were making ready for the campaign, he adds the remark:

> "One might ask whether the ladies and damsels and others were glad. Some perhaps were glad, but most were filled with grief; for they saw their fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins, husbands, friends and lovers take their leave for that perilous war, and some of them well remembered how in time past the men of Hainault departed with their lord and never again returned."

X

THE COMMONS

The great bulk of medieval literature reflects the life and manners of either aristocracy or clerks, for the writer of those days had often no other public. The principal currents, the epic, the romance and the lyric were all composed for court circles, and it was only at a comparatively late date that the bourgeois made his appearance in the Fabliaux. As for the peasant, he seldom appears except as a conventional figure shaped for the amusement of an aristocratic audience. Lyric poets, especially, in idyllic scenes, harped upon his simplicity by way of contrast to the refined manners of the courtier. At times the picture is simply humorous, and the trait most stressed is the almost inarticulate stupidity of the man whose sole range of interest lay in minding his sheep and cattle. More often, however, the peasant is an idealised type: the medieval serf is transformed into a poetic figure, who seems to have no other occupation but piping and dancing and weaving chaplets for his shepherdess.

Froissart, in spite of his experience of the taverns of Les Estinnes, where, we may assume, he had every opportunity of observing the peasant in everyday life, has no hesitation in presenting the traditional colouring. The shepherd of his *Pastourelles* is an expert in sheep and wool, and knows when lettuces and leeks are to be brought in, but he also combines these

practical pursuits with the making of rings and chaplets. The picture is obviously humorous; these are peasants drawn simply for the amusement of a gentle gathering, particularly at those marriage feasts which Froissart so often celebrates in his pastoral poems. The poet could always raise a laugh by a reference to the shepherd's diet of leeks, bread, cheese and water, or to the traditional staff, pipes and basket:

> Et si emportons nos freteaus
> Nos muses et nos canimeaus,
> Et pas n'oublions nos houlettes,
> Ni nos panetières bien faites;
> Les seigneurs en auront grand ris.

Such is the familiar "sweet-scented Eden" to which poets have ever turned, as we are told by George Sand, for "the consolation of the over-happy" upper orders.

At the same time we have ample evidence that it is precisely that society which most idealises the shepherd in its idyllic poetry, which will most despise the peasant in reality, and Froissart, the chronicler of a chivalrous and warlike aristocracy, is usually credited with a contempt for the lower orders, entirely in keeping with medieval tradition, and the prejudices of the patrons for whom he was writing. He has no more outspoken critic on this head than Claverhouse. "His chapters", says Claverhouse of the chronicler, "inspire me with more enthusiasm than poetry itself. And the noble canon, with what true chivalrous feeling he confines his beautiful expressions of sorrow to the death of the gallant and high-bred knight, of whom it was a pity to see the fall, such was his loyalty to his king, pure faith to his religion, hardihood towards the enemy, and fidelity to his lady-love!

Ah, benedicite! how he will mourn over the fall of such a pearl of knighthood, be it on the side he happens to favour or the other. But truly, for sweeping from the face of the earth some few hundreds of villain churls, who are born but to plough it, the high-born and inquisitive historian has marvellous little sympathy, as little, or less, perhaps, than John Grahame of Claverhouse."

But the gallant soldier, like most students of history, had only remembered those passages of the *Chronicles* which stirred a cord within his own bosom. Froissart, if he had adhered to his original plan of writing only a history of the great deeds of the wars, might well have shut his eyes to the plight of the masses, but the reader who wishes to know how the commons fared during the invasions has no difficulty in finding enlightenment. Let him read, for instance, the account of Edward's invasion of Normandy—the sacking and burning of towns and the devastation of the country-side, and, as an authority on this period has already stated, he will understand why the rich province of Normandy was not to recover for the next hundred years. The following, for example, is an account of a raid by Godefroi of Harcourt, one of Edward's lieutenants:

> Lord Godfrey, one of the marshals, with five hundred men of arms, rode off some six or seven leagues from the king's army, burning and devastating the country, which was fertile and plentiful, the granges full of corn, houses full of all riches, oxen, cows as fat as any in the world, lambs, sheep and swine. They found so many things to forage that they knew not what to do with them, and they took whatever pleased them and left the rest.
>
> At St.-Lo, an extremely rich town, with nine or ten thousand burgesses, most of whom were engaged in cloth-making, the inhabitants were quickly conquered and discomfited and put to flight, and the English entered and

did all that they wished; and many had pity of the men, women and children who wept and cried aloud and let them pass and leave the town; but they emptied the houses of all the precious goods which they found there, and took no count of aught but gold and silver.[1]

Scenes still more cruel were witnessed at the sacking of Caen. Only with difficulty could Edward be dissuaded from killing all the inhabitants and setting fire to the town; so terrible was the slaughter that Thomas Holland and his companions went through the town to put a stop to the "great mortality" of the two rich abbeys; one was inhabitated by six score nuns and forty novices, "most of whom were defiled", and the two abbeys were burnt as well as a large part of the town.

These descriptions speak for themselves, even though the chronicler voices no indignation. Elsewhere however he leaves nothing to the imagination in his accounts of the sufferings of the commons. After relating the jousts and feastings which took place at Brussels in 1340 when Edward had raised the siege of Tournay, he appends, by way of antithesis, a remark which clearly shows the other side of the picture. "And the poor people of the province of Hainault, who had lost their possessions and whose houses had been burnt in this war, started again to toil and work."[2] Froissart had evidently witnessed this state of things only too often, especially during the wars in Flanders, and it would be a gross injustice to accuse him of suppressing this side of the picture. We know already how greatly he was impressed by the elaborate preparations made in the North-East of France when Charles VI was planning his invasion of England, but he is far from blind to the fact that the cost was largely paid by the poor:

> The poor labourers who had harvested their corn and grain had only straw, and if they complained they were beaten and killed. The fishponds were drained of fish, and houses were destroyed for kindling. Even if the English had been there they could not have caused more havoc than the French troops, who said, we have no money now, but we shall have some on our return and then we will pay you. Then the poor villagers, on seeing the pillagers rob them of their goods, cursed them inwardly but dared say nothing. They wished them all dead and hanged and said to themselves: Go to England and may none of you return.[1]

So too in his account of the Flemish civil wars, to which he refers in one of his *pastourelles*; formerly he says the countryside had been covered with sheep, but now not one was to be found:

> Beau seigneur, cils fort erre
> Qui aime ni desire guerre;
> Car guerre nous a tous honis,
> Tant soloie avoir de brebis
> Que on ne savait ou bouter;
> Or n'en sauroie une ou trouver.[2]

When in the end peace was declared, the chronicler returns thanks to God, "for many poor people suffered from great want in Flanders, in the good towns and open country, owing to this war".

Another plague of the age was taxation, the effects of which an historian of chivalry could hardly be expected to describe, yet Froissart, whenever he mentions extortionate taxes, does so with obvious sympathy for the poor. The last words which he puts in the mouth of Charles V express the wish that the taxes of the realm be diminished as soon as circumstances allow of it: "As for these taxes which grievously oppress the poor," says the dying king, "deal with them according to your conscience and abolish them as soon as you can, for these things, although I have

maintained them, weigh heavily upon my mind; but the great wars and the great matters of all kinds appertaining thereto have caused me to do it, in order that I might have treasure".

Unfortunately, critics who have accused Froissart of an aristocratic bias have too often based their arguments upon passages which belong, not to him, but to Jehan le Bel. It is the latter who is responsible for the account of the conduct of the burgesses of Caen, who are reported to have issued from the town to attack the English, contrary to the orders of their leaders, and then to have fled in panic as soon as they saw the enemy with their banners and pennants waving in the wind and felt the enemy shafts falling amongst them. This report, we learn from other sources, is far from true, for the citizens of Caen actually put up a bold and resolute resistance, but, even so, it proves nothing against Froissart, who doubtless copied it in all good faith from his predecessor. As for the burgesses who played such an heroic part in the surrender of Calais, both chroniclers equally admire their self-sacrifice, but we have only to note how Froissart adds colour to the picture in his later version, emphasising the sorrow felt at their departure from the town, to realise that he can do justice to courage and devotion, even though it lay beneath an unmartial exterior.

We are now far removed from Claverhouse's opinion of the *Chronicles*, yet there is some truth in his criticism. It is only natural that one who looked upon the profession of arms as the most noble calling, for which the upper classes alone were suited, should be inclined to pour ridicule on the burgesses and peasants when they broke out beyond their traditional

bounds and ventured to take part in war. Froissart does not disguise his own opinion when he refers to the peasants as the " bonshommes du pays ", who at the defence of the pass of Blanquetaque, prior to the battle of Cressy, turned their backs as soon as the English archers began to shoot their arrows, and left the nobles to fight " as best they could ". Moreover, he makes no criticism of Philippe's decision, when raising an army to relieve Calais, not to include the commons, but merely states contemptuously : " for such people do but melt in battle as the snow melts in the sun, as we have seen at Cressy, at Blanquetaque and Caen, and elsewhere where he had taken them. So he would have none of them except the arbalesters of the cities and good towns. He would take their gold and silver, but nothing else ; their place was at home, looking after their wives and children, and carrying on their work and trade ; the nobles would fight as they were trained to do it ".[1]

It is this attitude which has led to the historian's distrust of the chronicler's account of the momentous popular risings which took place in England, France and Flanders in the fourteenth century. But all are obliged to turn to him as one of the most important sources for these events, even though they were not included in the original scope of the *Chronicles*, for, strangely enough, the same writer who is so rapturously praised by a Claverhouse as the historian of chivalrous exploits, also contributed a very large share to the epic of the popular struggle for liberty. However one-sided these tableaux, they serve as landmarks in history by depicting that conflict of passions which was later to have such far-reaching consequences.

In France it was after the defeat at Cressy that the commons forced themselves upon the attention of the court chronicler, for " if the Kingdom of England and the English and their allies were greatly rejoiced at the capture of King John, the Kingdom of France was sorely troubled and angered, and there was good cause. The knights and squires who returned from the battle were hated and reproached by the commons, and they dared scarcely enter the good towns ".[1] His account of the government of the Three Estates is all too brief, but it omits none of the essential features of the attempt made by the merchants' provost, Etienne Marcel, to reorganise the finances of the country, and the resolute resistance to the Regent's counsellors, who, rather than account for their spending of public moneys, preferred to escape from the kingdom, " wherein they acted wisely ", according to the chronicler's terse remark. With his instinct for the dramatic Froissart naturally seizes upon the more prominent episodes, such as the interview between Etienne Marcel and the Dauphin, the peasants' rising, the heartless reprisals and the saving of the court ladies at Meaux by Gaston de Foix.

The first of these scenes he relates with his usual calm ; he shows no feelings of hatred for the murderers:

> So it happened one day, when the Duke of Normandy was in his palace in Paris with a great body of knights, nobles and prelates, that the Provost of the merchants assembled also a great number of the commons of Paris who were of his sect and opinion, and they all wore similar hoods in order that they might recognise each other. And the said Provost came to the palace surrounded by his men and entered the Duke's chamber and requested him in bitter tones to take heed of the affairs of the state and to provide that the kingdom to which he was heir should be well protected so that the armed companies should not go

wasting and looting the country. The Duke replied that he would willingly do so if he had the means to do it, but that it was the duty of those who collected the profits and taxes of the kingdom: let them therefore undertake it.

I do not know how it happened, but words ran so fast and so high that in the presence of the Duke three of the greatest of his council were killed in his presence and so near to him that his robe was bespattered with blood. And he himself was in great peril but they gave him one of the hoods to wear, and he was obliged to pardon at once the death of his three knights.

When, however, the chronicler relates the atrocities of the undisciplined rabble of peasants, he paints the picture in colours which reveal all the horror caused by such scenes amongst the aristocracy, whose code of civilisation was completely baffled by the barbarity of the revolt:

For some of the people of the towns assembled leaderless in the district of Beauvais. And at first there were not a hundred of them and they declared that all the nobles, knights and squires of France were betraying the kingdom and that it would be a good thing if they were all destroyed.

. . .

They thus assembled, with no counsel and with no arms except weighted sticks and knives, and marched to the house of a knight who lived near by, and they broke in and killed the knight, his lady and the children, and burnt the house. They next marched to another castle and acted in a still more brutal fashion. . . . They continued thus in many places and increased in numbers until they were six thousand strong. And wherever they came they multiplied; for all of their like followed them, so that all knights, ladies, squires, their wives and their children were forced to flee some ten or twenty leagues to places of safety, leaving their houses empty and their possessions unprotected. And these wicked people, leaderless and unarmed, pillaged and burnt everything, and killed all the nobles they found and ill-treated all women and maidens, with no more pity and mercy than mad dogs. Certainly never was such havoc heard of amongst Christians or Saracens; and he who did the most villainous acts, acts that no human creature would ever think of, was the most esteemed and the most powerful amongst them.

For the chronicler there is but one saving feature in this episode, namely the rescue of the Duchess of Normandy and the three hundred ladies who had sought refuge from the rebels in the town of Meaux. The heroes of this act of gallantry were Gaston de Foix and a knight in the service of the English, the Captal de Buch, who were returning from an expedition to Prussia when they heard of the plight of the Duchess. Arriving at Meaux, they took their stand in the market-place just in time to stem the onrush of the insurgents:

> . . . and they placed themselves with their banners (that of the Count de Foix, the Duke of Orleans, and the pennant of the Captal), and with their swords drawn in their hands in front of these small, black, unarmed villains, ready to defend themselves and the market place. When the wicked people saw them thus drawn up, although in such small numbers, their rage abated, and those in front began to withdraw, when the nobles pressed forward, thrusting them with their lances and killing them with their swords. Then those who were in front, feeling the blows and fearing more, retreated in confusion, falling over each other.
>
> At this point numerous men-at-arms, issuing from the barricades, made their way to the market place and attacked these wicked people, and slew them in heaps like animals driving them in disorder from the town. And they killed until they were weary and tired of killing, and drove them in masses into the river Marne. In short they destroyed that day more than seven thousand and none would have escaped if the knights had wished to pursue them further.

Every Englishman is familiar with Froissart's dramatic account of Wat Tyler's rebellion, which is all the more remarkable seeing that the chronicler was living in Flanders at the time, and had therefore to depend upon the reports of others for his information. Although he has no sympathy for the popular leaders like John Ball, and regrets that the "mad

priest", who had once been imprisoned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, had ever regained his liberty, he is well aware of the causes of the revolt—the state of serfdom of the peasants, who were forced to till the lands of the nobles, harvest the corn and cut wood, and now claimed that if they did such work they were entitled to payment. John Ball's well-known speech voices all these demands. Is it to be considered authentic?[1] It is certain that the theme was no novelty, for already two centuries earlier, Jean de Meung, the author of the second part of the *Romance of the Rose*, had proclaimed the principle of equality amongst men, and it is possible that Froissart remembered his doctrine when relating the words which John Ball is reported to have addressed to the people on Sundays following Mass:

> "Good people, things cannot be well in England, nor ever will be, until every thing shall be in common, till there shall be neither vassal nor lord, and till all shall be equal. Why are they, whom we call lords, more masters than we? How have they deserved it? Why do they keep us in slavery? If we come from the same parents, Adam and Eve, what can they show and what reasons give, why they should be more masters than you or I? Except in making us toil for what they spend? They are clothed in velvets and fur, while we are in rags. They have wines, spices and good bread and we have only rye and refuse and straw, and water to drink. They have manors and palaces and we have nothing but the toil and the work, the wind and the rain in the fields. It is from us and our labour that they get their wealth. We are called serfs and are beaten if we don't perform their tasks, and we have no sovereign to whom we can complain, or who will hear us and do us justice. Let's go to the king, who is young, and tell him of our slavery, and that we wish it to be otherwise, or we will find a remedy ourselves. If we go together all manner of people who are called serfs and are kept in slavery will follow us to get their freedom."

Here again it is when the principal actors of the

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WAT TYLER'S REVOLT.

Punishment of the rebels; destruction of the letters accorded them by Richard.

[*face p.* 168.

drama meet that we have the full measure of Froissart's genius, and the result is one of those passages which form the corner-stones of history. On the one hand we have the crowd, twenty thousand strong, assembled at Smithfield, "where the horse-market is held on Fridays"—an unseemly rabble, for they have eaten and drunk without payment in the taverns of the city, and they are determined to ransack the town before nightfall, that they may have the pick of the booty before the men of Warwick and Reading arrive. One of the crowd is singled out for us; it is the apron-maker, who had supplied aprons to the insurgents and now demanded payment, thereby depicting the general state of mind of the mob. Such was the rabble that faced Richard when he arrived with his following of sixty horse. The king's first thought was to appease them, and he stopped in front of St. Bartholomew to hear their complaints. Wat rides forward, confident in the strength of his following:

> "King, see'st thou all those men that are there?"
> "Yes," said the King, "why do you ask?"
> "Because they are all under my orders and have sworn faith and allegience, and have promised to do what I wish."

The king returns a peaceful answer, but Wat seeks a quarrel and abuses a squire. It is just when he vows not to eat until he has removed the squire's head that the Mayor of London arrives. We are prepared for the climax:

> "Fellow, how dare you say such words in the King's presence?"
> "How does it concern you, what I say or do?"
> "Forsooth", said the Mayor. "You speak thus, vile fellow, in the presence of my lord? As sure as I live you shall pay for it."
> Then, drawing a big sword, which he was carrying, he struck the Tyler such a blow that he felled him to the ground at his horse's feet.

After all, impartial accounts of revolutionary scenes, written by contemporaries, are extremely rare, even in our own day, and Froissart seems to have stated the case of the rebels with unusual frankness. For the peasant in general he has sympathy; it is only when the existing order of things, to which he was personally so much attached, is threatened, that he speaks with indignation and contempt. His dislike, then, we feel, is due mainly to æsthetic reasons. Everything in the behaviour of the rebels revolts him: their unprepossessing appearance, their lack of armour and their ugly excesses. They destroyed beautiful buildings, such as the Savoy Palace, and broke every rule of gallantry and courtesy. They even penetrated to the very bedchamber of the King's mother and thrust their swords into her bed. As he himself states, he would not have included such ugly matter in his history, except that he desired that the nobles and good people should in future know how to deal with such wicked people. For democratic leaders, too, he has a word of warning: after relating how the leaders of the revolt in Flanders had all, with one exception, perished, he concludes: "Now behold the reward one has for serving the commons".

XI

A MASTER OF FAIR LANGUAGE

STUDENTS of fifteenth century literature are familiar with the anecdote of Margaret of Scotland, the short-lived and unhappy wife of Louis XI, and the poet Alain Chartier, who is now forgotten except for this story. Of all the "orators of the vulgar tongue", we are told, "the young princess, enamoured of poetry, loved especially Master Alain, then renowned as the father of French eloquence". One day—so runs the story—Margaret discovered the poet sleeping on a bench, and stole up to him and kissed him before the assembled company. When asked why she had kissed a man who was so ugly, she replied that she had kissed not the man, but the precious lips which had uttered so many good and virtuous words. This delightful anecdote is unfortunately a pure invention, for Master Alain died six years before Margaret came to France,[1] but it still deserves to be remembered as a picturesque reminder of the admiration of the later Middle Ages for the gift of eloquence. It has been said of the language of this period that it was "free from any anxiety or curiosity about the rules of good taste, because it had good taste to begin with, and did not need to think about it".[2] But if good taste was unconscious, it was evidently appreciated. "Fair language" was reckoned amongst the knightly virtues: Christine de Pisan, in her counsels to a

knight, bids him study at the feet of Apollo, and the biographer of Marshal Boucicault dwells at length upon his hero's gift of language, marvelling that a man who had given so little time to study should be so great a master of fine and ornate speech. Froissart is no less appreciative and frequently lavishes praise upon those persons who, in their orations, "adorn their arguments with fair language", informing us of the pleasure it gave to listen to the manner in which an able spokesman would recount his mission.[1]

Of this mastery of language, which was so esteemed by Froissart and his contemporaries, there is no more brilliant example than the *Chronicles*. They reveal all that was best in contemporary taste, whilst avoiding those verbal excesses which were soon to become the fashion, especially amongst the historians of the court of Burgundy, who drowned their matter in a flood of pure rhetoric.[2] Froissart, who loved the company and the conversation of his fellows and delighted in amorous debates with the ladies of Queen Philippa's court, writes, as he must have conversed, with a fluency and ease which have charmed many generations of readers. Never does he halt or linger for a word; his verbal store is so abundantly rich that he will orchestrate a theme with ample variations. When the six citizens of Calais left the town and the gate was shut behind them, there was "such great weeping, wailing and crying that it was grievous to hear and behold it".[3] Or again, after the capture of Caen by Edward, the English were so laden with spoils that they did nothing but "cart, carry and convey all sorts of good things . . . "[4] to their ships which were lying at anchor in the harbour. Often the synonym adds nothing to the first term; long lists

of groups such as "regarder et aviser, imaginer et considérer, juper et crier, défendre et garder", could be compiled, showing that the chronicler favoured the double expression merely as a matter of rhythm and emphasis.

And with this wealth of vocabulary Froissart varies his style to suit every range of circumstances within the scope of his subject matter. Unlike so many medieval chroniclers, who can only narrate in the uniform style of their bookish lore, Froissart had long frequented the men who enact his history; he had heard their counsels and had shared their life, at court, if not in camp. So we find in the *Chronicles* all shades of expression, from the rhythmic period of the orator to the coarse realistic gibe of the soldier or the curse of the commons, which, with its crude metaphor can scarcely be translated into modern language.[1] We have sustained passages such as that giving the dignified speech of the Bishop of St. Andrews when reprimanding Edward and his barons and prelates for declaring war on Scotland:

> . . . and we marvel greatly at this hardship which you have sought to bring upon your brother, our King, and on your sister, our Queen, in wishing to destroy this small inheritance which God has given them. Our lord the King and our lady the Queen beg you not to be so cruel as to burn and destroy their possessions; withdraw and order your men to withdraw, and give them leave to return each to his own home. . . .[2]

or the speech of Reginald de Limousin rebuking the Spaniards for their feelings of jealousy towards their French allies:

> How can you, my lords (calling each of them by his name, for he was well acquainted with them all), pretend to have more knowledge of battles or more experience in

> war than the valiant knights and squires here present? How can you imagine you can devise any plan superior to theirs, or that could be of any value? for their whole life has been employed in travelling from one kingdom to another in search of adventure. How can you dare offer any other opinion or to detract from what they have so nobly said, in the defence of the honour of the King and country, in which you are more interested than they, for you have therein your properties as well as your persons, while they have only their persons. . . .[1]

And we have passages, on the other hand, familiar in tone, which bear the stamp of everyday language, and bring us into close touch with the camp life of the fourteenth century, as when Thomas Moreaux, marshall of arms in Spain, says of the defenders of a town, whom he sees leaning over the battlements, that they are as "ugly as monkeys or bears devouring pears",[2] or when the Earl of Pembroke, who arrives late on the scene after the capture of Auberoche, is greeted by Derby with the words: "Welcome, cousin Pembroke, you have come just in time to sprinkle holy water on the dead".

Often in his description of an age of unrestrained passions Froissart has to present to us a character heated with anger. This he does with a realism of language unsurpassed by any writer. Robert Sall, the knight of Norwich, when pressed by the peasants to come and assist them at the time of Wat Tyler's rebellion, replies: "Back! wicked people, false, bad traitors! Do you wish me to leave my legitimate master for such dung as you? I would sooner you were all hanged".[3] On such occasions Froissart's kings can curse as well as other men: "Where is that son of a Jew's harlot?" shouts Henri de Trastamare to his half-brother, Don Carlos, in the scene before the murder; and the latter replies: "It is you who

are the son of a harlot; I am the son of the good King Alphonso."[1]

Not only is the language realistic, but also the turn of expression. The chronicler, for instance, has seized upon one of the most natural features of a dialogue when he makes an interlocutor, on hearing something new or important, repeat the essential word in the preceding speech. What could be more realistic, for example, than the reply of Charles VI on hearing of the attempted murder of the High Constable:

> "Ah, my lord, we dare not conceal from you the great mishap which has just taken place in Paris." "What mishap?" said the king.—"That which has befallen your constable, Olivier de Clisson. He has been killed."—"Killed?" said the king, "and how?" . . .

The secret of the chronicler's technique lies in a great measure in his rendering of movement and gesture. The following lines, prolific in verbs, show how he notes every movement of a scene: he is describing the fury of a man who has just heard that an opponent has challenged him to single combat:

> When Bernard heard this his heart swelled within him, and he cursed loudly, and said: "Hither! my arms! saddle me my charger! he shall not be refused!" It was done at once; he donned his armour, mounted, took his shield and his sword, ordered the gate to be opened and rode out into the fields.[2]

Equally animated descriptions are to be found on almost every page. William of Hainault, when he receives the Bishop of Lincoln, who has come to ask his opinion on the question of war with France, is ill with the gout and confined to his chair, and it is difficult in these circumstances to depict the energetic character of such a figure, thrilled by the prospect

of a mighty enterprise. But Froissart has seized upon the appropriate gesture. On hearing the Bishop's astounding mission William's first movement of surprise is to "strike the arm of his chair"; he then "ponders for a short time", before he replies.[1]

The moment of silence is also significant. None but a great artist would have imagined this means of conveying to us the gravity of the Count's decision. Froissart, although he makes his characters talk as volubly as any men, is fully alive also to the effects of silence. Long before Molière he realised that:

> Un silence est assez pour expliquer un cœur,

and there is no more striking example of this than the passage depicting the emotions of Jean de Montfort when he finds his enemy, Charles de Blois, lying dead on the battlefield:

> When they had come to the place where he was lying turned on his side and covered by a shield, he (Jean de Montfort) ordered him to be uncovered, then looked at him very piteously and thought for a time, and then said: . . .[2]

The chronicler was also aware of another feature of these moments of intense feeling, namely prayer. In his account of the judicial duel which Jean de Carrouge fought for his wife's honour against Jacques de Gris, it is thus that he describes for us the anguish of Jean's wife, who knew that if her husband were defeated he would be hanged, whilst she herself would be burnt:

> The lady remained in the coach covered in black, praying fervently to God and to the Holy Virgin, beseeching them to grant her victory that day according to her right.[3]

Froissart's psychology is that of the ordinary observer for whom gesture suffices to reveal the

thoughts of men, and in the *Chronicles*, as in everyday life, men's thoughts are translated into gesture, visible to the eye. For the simplest example we have only to note how the chronicler, instead of stating that men are surprised, informs us that "they looked at each other". But there is no lack of more subtle cases. When Flemish ambassadors in 1382 demanded from the English not only troops to help them against the French, but also the repayment of a debt of two hundred thousand crowns lent forty years earlier to Edward III, the English lords, on hearing their request, "began to smile". There is no need to add another word to indicate exactly what these two parties thought of each other. Nor do we need a long verbal description of the state of mind of Henry IV when his advisers urged him to put Richard to death, on the grounds that the country would never be safe so long as his adversary lived. Nothing could better express the conflict to which the new king was a prey than the few lines which state that he went out, leaving his counsellors to talk in the room, and came to his falcons, one of which he put on his wrist, and sought forgetfulness in feeding it.[1]

This method of description naturally implies that the chronicler, in his choice of terms, will prefer the picturesque word which appeals to the visual or auditive senses. In the account of Otterburn, for instance, we read that when the Englishman and the Scot come to blows they strike each other "sans faire Ho!" The ejaculation has no meaning in itself, but it reproduces all the inarticulate fury of the onslaught. What more realistic picture could we have of squalor and poverty than that put into the mouth of the Duke of Berry, who is trying to dissuade the

French from their project of invading England! "You will return so poor and so threadbare that your elbows and knees will be seen through your clothing, and you will be so tormented by lice that you will have as much as you can do to crush them between your nails (and he shows them how, by putting his two thumbs together)."[1] Many of these expressions have become current coinage in history, such as the words describing the attitude of the citizens of La Rochelle after the signing of the Peace of Bretigny: they preferred to be taxed to the extent of half their possessions rather than to be handed over to the English, and declared: "We will acknowledge the English with our lips, but our hearts will remain faithful to the King of France".

The *Chronicles* have often been compared to a picture gallery, but these "moving pictures of life" as they are styled by Gray,[2] could in modern language be compared still more fittingly to a cinematograph. The chronicler generally gives relief to his figures by describing, not their appearance, but their actions. He has left us few physical portraits: a knight is usually presented to us as "noble, courteous, bold and enterprising", a formula which does not help us to visualise him; it is when he is in action or when he opens his mouth to speak that his personality is thrust upon us. The figure portrayed with most detail, although, even so, it is scarcely more than an admirable silhouette, is that of Edward III sitting on the quarter-deck of his ship awaiting the arrival of the Spanish fleet before the battle of Winchelsea:

> And the King of England was on the quarter-deck of his ship dressed in a jacket of black velvet and was wearing on his head a black beaver hat which well became him; and

he was then, as I have been told by those who were with him, as cheerful as anyone had ever seen him. And he made his minstrels play before him a dance which my lord John Chandos, who was there present, had recently brought back from Germany, and for amusement he made the said knight sing with the minstrels and took great pleasure in it. And he looked up from time to time, for he had put a watch in the ship's castle to give warning when the Spaniards should appear.[1]

Compared with this, Froissart's other portraits are mediocre, like that of Gaston de Foix, which, with its paucity of adjectives, gives scarcely more than a general impression of the man:

I have seen in my time many knights, many kings, princes and others, but I never saw one who had such fine (beaux) limbs, nor such fine (belle) form, nor such fine (belle) figure, fine (bel) face, sanguine and smiling, with pleasing bluish eyes. . . .[2]

And this is immediately followed by an account of his moral attributes:

So perfect was he in everything that he could not be too highly praised. He loved what he ought to love and hated what he ought to hate. . . .

It is not this portrait, drawn in the usual eulogistic style of the age, that makes Gaston de Foix such a striking figure, but scenes like the following, describing Gaston's discovery of poison in his son's belt:

The Count then became suspicious but said nothing till the hour of dinner, when he washed and sat at table in his great hall, as usual. Gaston, his son, was wont to serve him and to taste of all the dishes. As soon as he had placed the first dish in front of his father, the Count cast his eyes and saw the strings of the purse fastened to his son's robe. Then his blood changed and he said, "Gaston, come forward! I desire to speak with you in the ear". The youth came towards the table. The Count then opened his robe and took a knife with which he cut the strings of the purse, which remained in his hand. Then, looking at it he asked his son: "What is in this purse?"

> The son, who was surprised and dumbfounded, said nothing, but became pale with fear and bewildered, and began to tremble, for he knew he was guilty. The Count opened the purse and took out the powder which he placed on a bread board and gave to a dog to eat. As soon as the dog had eaten and swallowed a little his eyes turned in his head and he died at once. When the Count saw this he was amazed and angered, and with good reason, and he got up from the table and took his knife and would have thrown it at his son and killed him outright, but knights and squires leapt forward and said: "Sire, in God's name, calm yourself; spare your son till you have learnt all about this matter". The first word which the Count said was in Gascon: "O Gaston, false traitor, it was for thee and to increase the inheritance which was to come to thee that I waged war against the King of France, the King of England, the King of Spain, the King of Navarre and the King of Arragon; and now thou wilt murder me! It is the act of an evil nature, and thou shalt die for it!" Then he leapt across the table, knife in hand, and with intent to kill him. But knights and squires threw themselves in front of him, many of them on their knees, beseeching him: "Ah! Sire! for God's sake do not kill Gaston; he is your only child. Have him guarded until you know everything. Perhaps he did not know what he was carrying and is innocent of this crime". "Then quickly", said the Count, "put him in the tower and let him be well guarded until a good account is rendered me."[1]

As some of the foregoing passages have already shown, the remarkable dramatic effect of the *Chronicles* lies not only in the depicting of movement, but also in the use of direct speech, which is handled by Froissart with rare psychological insight, revealing interplay of characters and every changing mood. Of the many examples, one of the most interesting is the scene describing the murder of the Flemish popular leader d'Arteveldt.[2] Incited by the Duke of Brabant, four hundred weavers assembled under his windows and attempted to force an entry. D'Arteveldt, coming bareheaded to a window overlooking the

street, began to parley with them. At first he is simply persuasive, and he addresses them as " bonnes gens " ; but as the flood of their wrath closes in upon him his tone changes and he appeals to the rabble as " Messeigneurs, messeigneurs " : the change of tone reveals all his despair and helplessness :

> " Good people, what do you want ? Why are you so moved ? Tell me and I will do my best to amend it." Those who could hear him replied in one voice : " We desire you to render us account of the great treasure of Flanders which you have raised during the last seven years at your discretion ; tell us what you have done with it and where you have put it ". Then Jacques d'Arteveldt, who saw that things were proceeding in a strange and unusual manner, sought to appease the people with gentle words, saying : " Good people, go back all of you to your homes and in three days I will call you and render you such good account that all will be satisfied ". They replied in one voice : " We will not wait, but come down and reason with us ". Jacques d'Arteveldt saw that things were going badly and that his life was in peril and he said : " Sirs ! Sirs ! wait there, and I will come and speak with you ". At these words they remained quiet, and Jacques left the room, and came down to his stable and horse, thinking to mount and escape by the rear, but he could not, for the house was surrounded on all sides. . . . Then a great tumult arose, and they forced open the doors and entered, and came to the stable and found Jacques d'Arteveldt preparing to mount. They then fell upon him, and Thomas, Dean of the weavers, dealt him the first blow on the head with an axe and killed him.

Froissart's descriptions of battles and chivalrous enterprises are so outstanding that his technique in these matters would need a special analysis had it not already received ample treatment at the hands of Ste-Beuve.[1] For Cressy and the siege of Calais the chronicler is much indebted to Jehan le Bel, so that neither of these episodes can be taken as an illustration of his methods, but one has only to compare the two

versions to realise the superiority of the younger writer. On the other hand, for the battle of Poitiers Froissart relied upon his own resources, and it is with regard to this well-known episode that Ste-Beuve writes: "Nothing could be more boldly drawn, more clear, more detailed, than this battle; we follow distinctly both the general plan as in a modern version, and also every single combat as in the Iliad". The general perspective is drawn for us by the combatants themselves, the four French knights despatched to reconnoitre the English positions, who returned to lay their report before the king and to advise on the plan of attack. As regards detail, Froissart has inherited the technique of the authors of the *Chansons de Geste*, for whom a battle is a succession of single combats. We read of the prowess of James Audley, who had vowed that if ever he fought in a battle with the King of England or one of his sons he would be the first to attack the enemy and would prove himself the best fighter on his side or would die in the attempt. We follow, too, the fortunes of two Frenchmen who, seeing that the day was lost, fled from the field of battle pursued by two English knights and in the end captured their pursuers. Details of this sort lend colour to the scene by showing us the temper of the combatants and by giving us definite instances which illustrate the fortunes of the battle. Finally, as Ste-Beuve has pointed out, the chronicler skilfully fills in the moments of waiting preceding the attack by describing the coming and going of the cardinal between the two armies and the pitching of the king's gorgeous crimson tent.

In medieval times the background was a relatively unimportant part of the picture, and Froissart's

descriptions are no exception in this respect. The chronicler moreover was a courtier, and was interested above all in the men he saw about him, in their fighting, their intriguing, their love-making, their tournaments and festivities, and he seldom includes in his survey even the briefest description of inanimate things. He will make an army travel from the north to the south of France without giving us any idea of the country through which it passed. He himself travelled to Italy and Scotland, but the accounts of his journeys bear few traces of any impression he received from the things of either country. Only occasionally does he break this silence with regard to the objects around him, in probably not more than a score of passages in the whole of the *Chronicles*. Some of these are strongly tinged by tradition, and remind us of the conventional opening of the medieval lyric, as when he prefaces his account of an expedition with the remark :

> When the fair season of March had come and the winds began to abate and the waters lose their fury and the woods turn green . . .

But there is an unmistakable touch of personal experience in his description of the severity of the Scottish weather encountered by the English in their march on Melrose :

> It began to rain so heavily and so fast, and a wind arose so cold which struck them in the face that the strongest were so beaten by the rain and the wind that they could scarcely keep on horseback, and the pages could not carry the lances but let them fall, and they separated one from the other and lost their way. They then crouched and hid together with their horses under oaks and big trees until daybreak, and some who were all frozen and drenched made big fires to dry and warm themselves ; and this rain and cold lasted till sunrise.[1]

We have also seen that the chronicler was deeply impressed by the pleasing nature of the country in the South of France through which he passed on his way to visit Gaston de Foix, and it was in connection with this journey that he wrote the longest description ever penned by him of any town :

> Tarbes is a very fine town situated in open country and amidst good vineyards ; and there is town, city and castle, surrounded by gates and walls and good towers and separated one from the other ; for the good river Lisse, which descends from the mountains of Bearn and Catalogne, flows through the town and divides it, and its waters are as clear as a spring.[1]

What is most striking, however, is that when Froissart mentions a background it is usually the sea. A fleet of vessels emblazoned with arms and banners and speeding through the waters appealed to his æsthetic sense no less than an army on land in which " every soldier seemed a prince ". In these descriptions the sea plays an important part, seeming to rejoice with pride when carrying its splendid burden :

> When the Duke of Arundel and the lords who were with him left the shores of Brittany, they sped, God and the wind with them, with full sail towards La Rochelle. It was so fine and so fair and the wind was so perfect that it was a great joy to see these ships on the sea, for there were about six score sails ; and the banners finely emblazoned with the arms of the nobles floated and shone in the sun. They thus came speeding onwards through the sea which smiled upon them, showing that she was glad to carry them. So, like a horse when it has left the stable and is eager for the road, the sea, with the help of the wind, appeared clearly to say : " Speed on ; it is I that am carrying you and I will put you in harbour and bring you to safety ".[2]

Although many critics have written on the style of the *Chronicles*, no attempt has so far been made to compare the successive versions from a stylistic

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A NAVAL FIGHT OFF LA ROCHELLE.

[*face p.* 184.

standpoint. Yet many changes made by Froissart when rewriting his early work are purely stylistic, and it is extremely interesting to note in these cases how in his more mature manner he renders his descriptions more animated and his characters more life-like. The process can be observed to some extent in one of the scenes of the siege of Calais (to select in the first place a familiar episode). The First Version, reproducing Jehan le Bel, informs us how Walter Manny returns from his interview with the defenders of the town, who wish to surrender, but only on condition that all in the city are pardoned. He announces this decision to the king, but the only terms Edward will accept are unconditional surrender. The same version then continues :

> Then the gentle Sir Walter came forward again and spoke most wisely to the king and said, in order to help the men of Calais : " My lord, you might indeed err in demanding this and a bad example do you give us. Should you wish to send us to some of your fortresses we would not willingly go if you kill these people as you intend, for the same treatment might be meted out to us ".

If now we turn to the third version of this account, we find that the tact of Sir Walter, which is hinted at in the earlier account, is far more apparent, and at the same time we are more conscious of Edward's obstinate and irate temperament. After reporting his mission and receiving the king's blunt reply that all the defenders must die, Sir Walter does not pursue the discussion at once, but :

> . . . withdrew somewhat behind the king, for he was accustomed to his temper, and he looked at the barons who were there and with a glance asked them to support his arguments; he then came forward to the king and said . . . .

Not only is his speech reported as above; we also learn how the barons in turn endeavour to persuade the king to be less revengeful:

> "Dear Sire, my lord Walter Manny speaks with truth and wisdom, and we beg you to believe him and to soften somewhat the edge of your wrath".

Whereupon Sir Walter again returns to the attack:

> "Dear Sire, never was such an act performed; it would be too great a cruelty to kill so many people. There are many amongst them who are guilty of nothing, although they are shut up within the city walls. Act mercifully: take the town and the castle and give the defenders their freedom. They will then pray for you, and in all foreign parts, wherever they go for their livelihood, they will record your goodness and will look upon this pardon as an act of charity."

Edward, in the face of these arguments, at first makes a small concession: he will accept a ransom for the knights and squires who do not belong to Calais, but the rest must die; and he repeats the reason which makes him so obstinate: the havoc caused amongst the English on the high seas by the people of Calais. It is at this point that the two versions converge, when Edward finally gives way to the appeal of Walter Manny, and offers to pardon the defenders provided six leading burgesses are delivered up to him, with the keys of the town.

Whilst the above episode shows how the mature artist will add just a few strokes to a picture he considers to be already well-nigh perfect, there are others which are almost entirely rewritten. It is curious then to see how he expands an original theme, dramatising a situation, adding reasons and motives, and generally converting narrative into direct speech. These modifications, even if they bring no fresh light to bear upon

the former narrative, nevertheless greatly intensify its interest. The following passage may be taken as an example. When Robert of Artois sought to persuade Edward to declare war on France his advice to the king, in the first version, is contained in one brief sentence: "Sir Robert exhorted and advised the king early and late to challenge the King of France, who had no right to his inheritance". On rewriting this episode many years later, Froissart was no longer content with this bare statement of fact: he now pictures all the details of the scene; Sir Robert and Edward are now presented to us, the former as a persuasive courtier, the latter as a young and ambitious monarch. The chronicler imagines every argument which could influence Edward in his momentous decision: "The said Sir Robert spoke often to the king, saying: Sire and dear cousin, you are young and your future is before you, so you must not hesitate to demand your rights. You have two or three things to help you beside your right. You have wealth and the good will of your people who desire war and dislike peace. . . . Moreover you have many friends beyond the seas, who will counsel and support you in your undertaking as soon as you have begun the war, if war is necessary. For there is nothing in the world that the Germans desire more than a pretext to fight the kingdom of France, and lower her pride and share in her wealth. Dear sire and cousin, be assured of this: although Philip of Valois was elected and crowned King of France, you too were much in men's minds, and if you had pressed your claim the coronation would never have taken place. You may do what you will, but if you forfeit your inheritance by your weakness, you who

are young, you will be less esteemed and feared, and it will be to your great confusion and to the damnation of your body and soul. In any case, assemble your men and your council ".[1]

Occasionally it happens that the original is based upon an error of historical fact: it is then even still more interesting to follow the chronicler's subsequent amplifications, as it is obvious that these are his own additions, drawn entirely from his imagination. He had read, for instance, in Jehan le Bel that Queen Philippa was present at the battle of Nevill's Cross, but she was actually in Flanders at the time; his predecessor had described the Queen's joy on hearing of the success of her army, and Froissart, in his First Version, reproduces the passage:

> When the Queen of England, who was at Newcastle, heard that the day had been won for her and for her people she greatly rejoiced and with good cause. And she forthwith mounted her palfrey and came as quickly as she could to the place where the battle had been fought. The four prelates and the three barons who had been the leaders in the battle received the noble lady most kindly and gladly and described to her how God had visited them, so that, though a mere handful of men, they had discomfited the King of Scotland and all his host. Then the Queen asked what had become of the King of Scotland. They told her that an English squire named John Copland had led him away, but they knew not where. Then the Queen decided that she would write to the said squire and would bid him to bring to her her prisoner the King of Scotland and inform him that he had not acted well nor to her liking in thus taking him away without her leave. The letter was written and despatched by a knight. Whilst the said knight pursued his journey the English restored order and remained on the ground where they had won so valiant a victory, and the Queen remained with them and greatly honoured and fêted the good and valiant knights who had been in this engagement.

In remodelling this narrative the chronicler gives

special weight to this episode, which serves to emphasise the magnitude of the English victory. The queen is presented to us riding her palfrey and accompanied by her ladies, awaiting the return of her victorious knights at Newcastle. On their arrival she welcomes them "with joy and kindness" and begs of them saying: "You will come and sup with me to-night; well indeed have you deserved it". She then hears of the capture of David Bruce and with great impatience she enquires repeatedly, "When shall I see my prisoner, the King of Scotland, and the knight who captured him? Why do they not bring to me the man who captured the King of Scotland, my enemy, for I would be right glad to see him?" So the narrative continues,[1] and as we possess the original we can see at a glance how Froissart animates the skeleton outline which he had before him, giving to the Queen, to the wounded David Bruce and to John of Copland, the king's captor, a relief which was totally lacking in the earlier account.

By a study of this process of elaboration, found in each successive version, one could thus compile that treatise on æsthetics which Froissart himself never formulated, and it would be found to differ little from that of the heroic poet, who states:

> . . . You will not forget to represent in your verse the beating of horses' hoofs, the brightness and splendour of the arms struck by the sunlight, nor will you forget to stir up the clouds of dust under the feet of the soldiers and horses marching to battle, and to give the cry of the soldiers, the clashing of pikes, the breaking of lances, the encounter of axes, the diabolical sound of canonry and arquebus, which make the earth tremble and rend the air.

The quotation is from the Preface to the *Franciade*, but

it is in almost identical terms that Walter Scott writes of the chronicler's style:

> His history has less the air of a narrative than of a dramatic representation. The figures live and move before us; we not only learn what they did but learn the mode and process of the action and the very words with which it was accompanied. In Froissart we hear the gallant knights, of whom he wrote, arrange the terms of combat and the manner of the onset; we hear their soldiers cry their warcries; we see them strike their horses with the spur; and the liveliness of the narrative hurries us along with them into the whirlwind of battle.[1]

Scott's admiration for the style of the *Chronicles* is shared by almost every critic and commentator, but one modern authority makes an important reserve: whilst allowing that there are scenes in the *Chronicles* not unworthy of Shakespeare, he challenges Froissart's right to such passages, which, he states, appear to have fallen directly from the mouths of his interlocutors; the chronicler's own part in the redaction of his work, on the other hand, was no more than that of a reporter of good memory, skilled in note-taking, who would often write merely from dictation.[2] This suggestion, at first sight, seems so subtle as to be almost unanswerable, for the indebtedness of an author to contemporary personages and influences is in most cases an immeasurable quantity. In this instance, however, there are fortunately arguments which prove, as definitely as such things ever can be proved, that the artistic genius which we admire in the *Chronicles* is the genius of none other but Froissart himself.

It is true that Froissart frequently mentions the taking of notes; he believes that there is no better retentive than writing,[3] and no one could blame him for this, for how could he have compiled otherwise with any accuracy such a vast chronicle? But there

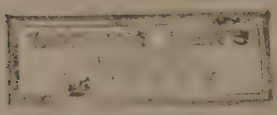
is no reason for regarding these notes as the final form of his expression; on the contrary, he tells us distinctly in the same passage which has been interpreted as a proof that he wrote from dictation, that these notes were afterwards revised: after hearing and "writing down" the reports of Fernando Pacheco, he states that on his return home he "worked upon the words" and "chronicled" all the events of the Portuguese wars. The words "ouvrer" and "chroniser"[1] indicate clearly the difference between the rough notes obtained from the Portuguese knight and the final version elaborated in the solitude of the study. Moreover, that much was invented by him on these occasions is shown by his admission in other passages that he does not reproduce the exact terms of a speech, but only "such or similar words".[2]

We have also conclusive evidence of the chronicler's creative powers in his successive versions of the same events, of which examples have already been quoted. It is not probable, for instance, that he would find informants to amplify at varying intervals, corresponding to the dates of the different redactions, Queen Philippa's imaginary speeches, which were based in the first place on an error of fact, and we have seen how those additions, which increase the dramatic effect of the narrative, are characteristic of the style of the *Chronicles* as a whole. Any passages not composed by Froissart's own hand would have some special features distinguishable from the author's general manner. But there is no such lack of homogeneity, no lack of unity which might induce us to change the presiding genius of the work to the rôle of a mere compiler. Why doubt, to quote a case which has been specifically mentioned, the chronicler's

rights to the well-known monologue of Aymerigot Marcel, looking back upon " his good life " of former days and the spoils he was wont to win from rich abbots and merchants ? The passage, far from being isolated, is entirely in keeping with a hundred other reflections in which the chronicler dwells upon his favourite theme of the changes of fortune ; it reminds us in particular of the account of the flight of the Count of Flanders who, when hiding in an old woman's cottage, reflects upon the humility of that position for one who, that same morning, could call himself one of the greatest princes of Christendom.[1]

Finally, if Froissart's own share in the composition of the *Chronicles* was as humble as has been stated, it is not probable that he would have revised and rewritten his work so many times, mainly with the view of introducing æsthetic improvements. These repeated corrections, which are unparalleled in medieval literature, are the sure mark of a true artist. " Un homme qui a eu la faiblesse d'être auteur ", says Voltaire, " doit, à mon sens, réparer cette faiblesse en réformant ses ouvrages jusqu'au dernier jour de sa vie." Froissart has complied with this dictum to the last letter and none more so than he, and his whole work reveals a sense of joy in his creation :

> " I have taken delight in describing to you the details of these matters and I have taken more pleasure in it than in anything else. The more I work upon these things the more they please me, for just as the gentle knights and squires love the calling of arms and perfect themselves by constant exercise, so I, by toiling in this matter, acquire skill and take pleasure in it."[2]



XII

FROISSART'S POETRY[1]

When we turn from the *Chronicles* to Froissart's *Poésies* we leave the clatter and tumult of battles and tournaments and find ourselves in well-trimmed gardens or in fields and woods. It is the realm of Cupid, where none but the faithful servants of the god are admitted, all of whom have pledged themselves to the pursuit of Honour, Courtesy, Largesse and Valour. The season is perpetual May; birds are singing overhead, and amidst fragrant flowers, roses, violets, columbine and daisies, light-footed and sweet voiced fairies, Beauty, Youth, Pleasance and Gladness dance and sing. It is there that the lover wanders forth to meet his lady, and falls a victim to the shafts of Cupid which pierce his eye and penetrate his heart, when nothing but unceasing service to the god can heal his wounds.

This setting is usually presented in the form of a dream, so that the gulf is bridged between the world of our experience and that of the poet's imagination. Such dreams were familiar to Froissart's contemporaries. Almost every prince, almost every knight, was then a poet. Wenceslas of Luxembourg, Otho de Granson, Marshall Boucicault, the Count d'Eu, Charles d'Orleans, René d'Anjou are but a few of the names of those whose works have been handed down to our century. Of the universal vogue of poetry,

as well as of the accompanying arts, singing and dancing, Froissart's biography in itself furnishes ample proof; his special duty at the English court, we have seen, was to compose lyrics for Queen Philippa; in his native country he wrote verse for Wenceslas; at the court of Gaston de Foix he read his romance *Meliador* nightly to the assembled company, and it was a volume of his poems that he presented to King Richard II.

If we of to-day, who are less accustomed to the language of courtly love, fail to recognise at first sight the beauty of the Garden of Delight, we can assist our imagination by visualising the conceits of the fourteenth century poet as they presented themselves to the artists of the age. In the numerous manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose*, for instance, the work of these artists is still there to remind us of the beautiful and graceful forms which Froissart's contemporaries gave to the personified abstractions who inhabit the abode of Cupid, the winged god with bow and arrow, the tall slender maidens Beauty and Pleasance, of refined and delicate features, the wounded lover and his hideous enemy Danger. With these rich and striking figures before us we at once gain contact with this world of poetry and allegory, of whose reality the music of rhythm and words alone might not convince us.

The chief theme of the *Poésies*, as Froissart told King Richard, is Love. Love, for the poet of the Middle Ages, meant courtly love, which had been sung first by the troubadours in the gay courts of Southern France and then, from Provence, had spread over the whole of Europe. Tradition had established a code of love, just as the art of warfare

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A KNIGHT RECITING VERSE TO HIS LADY.

British Museum Harleian MS. 4431.

[*face p.* 194.

had been formulated in a code of chivalry. Froissart, like other poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was bound by the same traditions as his predecessors. He often repeats what a hundred others had said before him. The Lover, he insists, must serve in silence day and night, and must offer himself, body, heart and soul, to his mistress :

> Taire et servir, nuit et jour obéir,
> Corps, cœur, penser, foi, entente et desir,
> Très humblement envers sa dame offrir. . .[1]

To all this devotion, however, his mistress remains cold and indifferent ; the Lover beseeches in vain for pity ; he would be well pleased if only he could live in hope :

> Que, se jamais n'avoie aliegement,
> Si bien me plaist li vivres en espoir
> Que toujours veuil demeurer longement
> En cel estat, car mieux ne puis manoir.[2]

He craves therefore to be allowed to serve unceasingly ; indeed, he even prays that when he dies he may be remembered by the name of Lover rather than of beloved :

> Et quand viendra de Dieu la saintisme heure
> Que de mon corps il voudra oster l'ame,
> Je veuil qu'il soit escript dessus ma lame
> Que par amours amer, non estre amés
> (Se l'ai esté, petit amans clamés)
> Avec les amoureux dors et repos.[3]

For this life of devotion and service, however, he reaps his reward ; for his love enobles him ; it is the source of all the virtues to which he aspires :

> Car qui veut son cuer entamer
> En bons moeurs et en nobles teches,
> En tous membres de gentillesses
> Amour est la droite racine.[4]

Therefore, in spite of his sufferings, the poet is grateful to Love and his lady; for Love who took possession of him in his youth dispelled all ignorance and coarseness:

Amours me mist
Quant il me prist
Hors d'ignorance et rudesse,
Point ne mespriſt,
Quand il m'apriſt
A amer en ma jeunesse.[1]

These are the essential themes of courtly love, and they give the dominant note of Froissart's poetry. But the real genius of our nonchalant and pleasure-loving poet was far removed from the mystical longings and abstract analyses of the troubadours. Froissart, like every other poet of the fourteenth century, was bound to accept the traditional themes, but these are merely the chrysalis, whence a new form emerges, which is one of youth. There is little in common between what has been called the "religious coldness" of the older poetry and the vigorous spirit of the man who, like a child, exultingly proclaims:

Sans frein, sans selle, sans bride,
Par le monde chevauche et ride.[2]

Self-sacrifice is not in his nature; he demands of life pleasure and amusement, beauty, wealth and power:

Je souhaite joie et paix en tous temps
Liesse en cœur et bien eſtre esbatans,
Sur toutes riens bien dansans et chantans,
Friche de corps, amoureuse et sachans,
Bien avisée et sagement parlans,
Chevance avoir et seignourie grans.[3]

With all the frankness of youth he rejoices in his thoughtlessness; he will trouble his head with no serious problems, for he prefers to dance and play:

Mon esperit n'i peut entendre,
Car il ne veut qu'a une tendre
C'eſt a eſtre gais et jolis,
A amer solas et delis,
Danses, caroles et esbas.[1]

He tells us that he would rather have a chaplet of flowers presented by a young and gladsome maiden than all the wisdom to be found between Paris and Sens :

J'auroie plus chier un chapiel
Fait de fleurettes bien et bel,
Donné de dame ou de tousete
Jeune, lie, friche et doucete,
Que ne feroie tout le sens
Qui eſt a Paris ne a Sens.[2]

We can well understand, therefore, that the traditional themes of courtly love must have been monotonous for such a light-hearted poet. He will not be satisfied, like the troubadours, with a "distant love"; his mistress is no longer a pale idealised figure but a maiden of flesh and blood, who is always ready to dance and sing or even to romp and play. Nor is Froissart's lady so indifferent to Love's appeal as tradition would make her, for when convention bids her repel her lover her heart protests against her words, and with a pathetic sigh she longs to recall the refusal her mouth has uttered :

Par un tout seul escondire,
De bouche, non de cœur fait,
Ai je mon ami retret
De moi, dont je morrai d'ire.

Hélas ! que ma bouche fait,
Ne comment ose elle dire
Tout le contraire dou fait
De ce que mon cœur desire ? . . .

J'en veuil mon cœur assoufire
Maugré que la bouche en et,
Ne ja, pour cri ne pour bret,
Ne s'en laira desconfire. . . .[3]

With words too which no mistress of the courtly poets would have deigned to utter she claims her right to love:

Se par honneur sui donnée,
Et de cœur enamourée
A mon doulc ami
Qui m'aime bien et je li,
Je n'en doi estre blasmée.[1]

Froissart, moreover, is too familiar with the various aspects of human nature to take even the subject of love too seriously. We often detect a note of irony in his treatment of the conventional themes, as when he tells us that he is happiest when asleep, for it is only in his dreams that his mistress is kind to him:

Car en dormant je me conseille,
Ce m'est vis, au dieu Morpheus,
Qui mes besognes, qu'on toueille,
Remet assés bellement sus,
Car avoir me fait ris et jus
De ma dame et plusieurs depors,
Dont en veillant sui moult ensus;
Je n'ai nul bien, se je ne dors. . . .[2]

He even informs us, with playful alliteration, that he has learnt to beware of women, for in spite of their sweet and kindly countenance they cause more trouble in the world than men:

Plusieurs gens vont souvent au medecin
Pour demander conseil de leur besogne,
Et li aucun, soit en jeun soit en vin,
Aient le fièvre, ou le goute, ou le rogne,
Ja ne vorront de medecine ouvrer.
Or je n'en veuil mie trop arguer,
Car je ne sais liquel sont li plus sage,
Mais je sais bien qu'il se fait bon garder
De froid, de fruit, de femme et de fromage. . .[3]

This playfulness and good humour in the treatment of what was once considered a most solemn theme gives a decidedly personal tone to Froissart's poetry. But this is not the only innovation. Two of his

poems, *Le dit du Florin* and *Le Débat du cheval et du Lévrier*, refer to his own experiences, the first to his return from Scotland, the second to a mishap which had befallen him at Avignon. These works have few parallels in earlier medieval poetry. Earlier poets would sing of the exploits of their patrons or, if they voiced their own feelings, they would pour them into a conventional mould. We have no portrait of a medieval writer before Villon which can be compared with Froissart's description of himself in his amusing dialogue with his last remaining florin. These two autobiographical poems are to be matched therefore with the later and more personal chronicles; they reveal to us a writer who is no longer of a subservient status, but presumes at last to think that the world is interested in his thoughts and feelings.

Almost all poetry of the later Middle Ages flows from one fountain-head, the thirteenth century romance, *Le Roman de la Rose*. The influence of this work is seen above all in the first of Froissart's longer narrative poems, *Le Paradis d'Amour*, which has the same form and setting as its famous model. The poet dreams that he wanders forth one May morning in sadness of heart, for he has long been the slave of Love, who has done nothing to reward his service. He sits down beneath a hawthorn where, to the accompaniment of the nightingale, he voices his complaint:

Je soloie en esbatement
User mon temps et mon jouvent.
Aimi! Or me font autrement
  Amours constraindre,
Quant celle que j'aime ardamment,
De tout mon cœur entierement,
Ne veut sa dureté noient
  Muer ne fraindre.[1]

Suddenly he is aroused from his thoughts by two dames in queenly garb, "more beautiful than any picture", Plaisance and Esperance. They are Cupid's maidens and they come to rebuke the poet for his infidelity to their master, to whom he had sworn loyalty and obedience. However cruel his mistress may be, the lover, they say, must take what she is pleased to offer; nor will she accord her grace on first demand, for Love must test the loyalty and steadfastness of the lover. They promise to intercede for him provided he will lay aside his melancholy, and they lead him forth to the abode of Cupid, singing as they pass through shady woods and meadows:

On se doit souffrir et taire
Et tout en gré recevoir
Quanqu'Amours ordonne, voir.[1]

Soon they see a great company of ladies and youths, all dressed in green, the former adorned with pearls and gold embroideries, the latter wearing horns of ivory and gold. This is the Paradise of the world's great lovers. There one could see Troilus and Paris, Lancelot, Tristan and Iseult, Parsifal, Helen, Medea and Jason. The poet sings a lay to Love, who accepts his homage and promises to reward him. He wanders forth to the woods again, and there he meets his mistress, who now accepts him as her serving man. The poet's pain is changed to joy; they sit upon a grassy bank surrounded by Love's fair maidens and, whilst his lady, with delicate and gentle fingers, weaves a chaplet of daisies, the poet sings a ballad to his favourite flower, the daisy:

Sus toutes flours tient on la rose a belle,
Et en après, je crois, la violette;
La flour de lys est belle, et la perselle;
La flour de glay est plaisans et parfaite;

Et li pluisieurs aiment moult l'anquelie,
Le pyone, le muguet, la soussie.
Cascune flour a par li son merite ;
Mais je vous dis, tant que pour ma partie,
Sus toutes flours j'aime la margherite.[1]

This slender story is narrated in 1,700 lines ; nevertheless, although the poem contains so little action, the interest never slackens, thanks to the blending of narrative and lyric, the lively dialogue, and above all, the resonant rimes and changing rhythm.

The opening lines of the *Paradis d'Amour* are of special interest to the English reader, for they remind us of Chaucer's prologue of the *Book of the Duchesse*. The French poem begins :

Je suis de moi en grant merveille
Comment je vifs quand tant je veille,
Et on ne poroit en veillant
Trouver de moi plus travaillant. . . .

and Chaucer likewise states :

I have gret wonder, by this lyghte
How that i live, for day ne nyghte
I may slepe wel neigh noght
I have so many an ydel thoght.

It was once thought that Froissart copied these lines from Chaucer, for it was supposed that the *Paradis d'Amour* was written in 1384 whereas the *Book of the Duchesse* dates from 1369.[2] The date assigned to Froissart's poem, however, is obviously erroneous, for this work is mentioned by Froissart in his *Buisson de Jeunesse*, which was composed in 1373, and it is there given as the first of his poems ; moreover, it appears first in the manuscript, in which the works are generally arranged in a chronological order. Finally, the evidence of Froissart's own reference, together with that of the manuscript, is confirmed by

the character of the poem, which is the least original of Froissart's works, and was therefore most probably composed in his youth. If, therefore, we accept this converging evidence, the *Paradis d'Amour* preceded the *Espinette amoureuse*, and this in turn appears to have been written about the year 1363. As for the date 1384 which has been assigned to the *Paradis d'Amour*, this is probably due to the mention of the knight Meliador, which was supposed to refer to Froissart's own romance, written (at least in its final form) some time after 1383. But this reference is either an interpolation, as Prof. Kittredge suggests,[1] or else it denotes that the knight Meliador was already well known to Froissart's readers, and this indeed seems more probable, for it is not likely that the poet would chose for his paradise of lovers a figure of his own recent creation.

Our conclusion is therefore that it was Chaucer who borrowed from Froissart, which, in fact, was more normal than the inverse procedure. Chaucer, we know, had an intimate knowledge of French, and borrowed systematically from French writers; Froissart, on the other hand, had probably no more than a superficial knowledge of English, and we have no evidence that either he or his French contemporaries were ever influenced by English writers.

Allegory was never more popular than in the later Middle Ages, owing again very largely to the influence of the *Romance of the Rose*, to the sentimental imagery of which few of the later writers made any personal contribution. Froissart, however, will always be remembered as the inventor of a new and subtle image. One of his longer poems, *Li Horloge Amoureux* is a curious art of love, in which the clock is taken as a

parallel to the lover's heart. The weight which sets the clock in motion is the Beauty of his lady which impels Desire in his breast; but Desire would be too impetuous if it were not checked by Fear; Fear then is the regulator which controls the clock's action; the wheel which revolves in steady, continuous motion is in its turn the image of the lover's unceasing Devotion to his lady; and so the parallel continues: the clock provides images for all the inhabitants of the realm of love—Loyalty, Patience, Honour, Courtesy, Valour, Humility, Youth and Happiness.

To the reader of to-day the interest of the poem lies less in its subtle analysis of sentiment than in its description of the mechanism of the clock, which was still a novelty in the fourteenth century. Froissart praises the ingenuity of its inventor and admires the mechanism which enables it to tell the hours of the day or night even when there is no sun. The clock which he had in mind was probably not that of Valenciennes, which, according to Henri d'Outreman,[1] was restored in 1377, for this was furnished with one globe which moved according to the seasons, whilst another, painted with figures representing man's labours during each month, marked the quarters of the moon. Froissart mentions none of these features, but he refers to the dial which revolves once a day, and also to the clock-keeper, whose duty it was to rectify the vagaries of the early clock, as in the case of the big clock of Rouen, where the wife of the clock-maker was appointed to strike the hours when the mechanism failed.[2]

The novelty of the *Horloge Amoureux* appealed to Froissart's contemporaries. Christine de Pisan, we find, makes use of the same parallel in her *Epître*

d'Othea, where, judging from the context, she appears to be imitating Froissart's poem ; the image moreover was illustrated by the artist who illuminated the manuscript which Christine presented to Isabeau de Bavière. Finally, the poem was still popular in the fifteenth century, judging from the reference of Martin le Franc :

> Lis souvent maistre Jehan Froissart
> En son livre et en son traitié
> De l'orloge amoureux, ou l'art
> De sage amour est bien traictié.[1]

Another narrative poem, *L'Espinette amoureuse*, is to be noted mainly for its biographical details, to which reference has been made in an earlier chapter. It is in this long poem that Froissart describes his early youth and his love for Marguerite. But the poet scarcely succeeds in carrying our interest beyond the first phases of the story. We can still read with interest his good-humoured account of himself as a schoolboy and the light and graceful lines describing his first meeting with his mistress, but the rest of the poem makes us regret that the poet ever left the idealistic plane of the *Paradis d'Amour* ; so long as he remains in dream-land he need be at no pains to convince us of his sincerity, but when he introduces a mistress of human form his realism and courtly sentiments strike a discordant note. We are unmoved, for instance, by his grief, occasioned by the news that his mistress is about to marry, when that grief is depicted in an outburst of 800 lines, and especially when the poet, after a digression of 200 lines on the adventure of Phebus, has to remind us of his subject !

> Pour revenir au droit propos
> De mon plaint de quoi je propos.

We then agree with the lady's curt remark that the lover is not always so grief-stricken as he would appear!

Possibly Froissart does not intend us to take his poem too seriously. The genuine lover loses his sense of humour, but he, on the contrary, is sensitive to the folly of his ways; his vigil before his lady's house he interrupts with the reflection:

> Encore te tien je pour kokart
> Quand tu te tiens ici si tard.
> Va toi coucher![1]

There is a note of mockery too in the final scene in which the lady dismisses her lover by violently pulling his hair! Are we to imagine that the poet is as naive as he would appear when he interprets this gesture as a mark of affection? He seems more sincere in his opening lines where he warns us that love is not worth the price one pays for it!

> Plusieurs enfants de jone eage
> Desirent forment le peage
> D'amours payer; mais s'il savoient
> Ou se la cognissance avoient
> Quel chose lor faut pour payer,
> Ne s'i vodroient assayer.[2]

The *Joli Buisson de Jeunesse*, written several years later (1373), continues the same theme as the *Espinette Amoureuse*. The substance is of the lightest texture. The poet first reproaches himself for neglecting the talent which God had given him, and for having been attracted by the gains of commerce. Philosophy admonishes him for this neglect of the Muses and by appealing to his love of fame induces him to return to the art of poetry. A portrait of his mistress brings back the poet's thoughts to the days of his youth and to his former love. He dreams that Venus is before

him; he complains to her that in spite of his loyalty he has received no recompense, and now his youth is spent. Venus rebukes him for his folly and bids him rise, for nature is toiling and birds are singing in woods and fields. She leads him to the abode of Youth, where the lover finds his mistress accompanied by Franchise, Doux-Semblant, Pitié, and also by three base varlets, Refus, Dangier, Escondit. The former plead the lover's cause and seek to overcome his adversaries. They play a wishing game: Plaisance pleads for the warm clear air of perpetual summer, and for gardens filled with roses and lilies:

Je souhede qu'il fust toutdis estés
Beaus et jolis, et li airs attemprés,
Clers et seris, gracious et soués,
Et qu'on veist, par vregiers et par près,
Roses et lys et flourettes assez, . . .[1]

Humility desires that she may be gracious and pleasing in word and in action:

Je souhede d'estre lie at ligère
Esbanians, friche, gaie et entière,
En tous deduis gracieus et mesnière,
Au bel parler aussi très coustumière,
Au bien danser avoir grace et manière.[2]

Doux-Semblant asks only for fields, woods and gardens where he and his lady can desport themselves and talk of love!

Je souhede joie, paix et repos,
L'esbatement des plains champs et des bos
Cours de levriers et des oiseaus beaus vols,
Et a veoir jardins, vergiers et clos
Bien ordonnés et rieuléement clos;
Arbres et fruits, tant menuiers que gros,
Fuissent dedens grant quantité enclos,
Pour solacier
Cardeneruels, merles et rosegnols
Et tous oiseauls amourous et mignos.[3]

The poet having thus inscribed all their wishes, they then sally forth to seek the judgment of the god of Love. Thereupon the poet awakens, and recognising the emptiness of his dream, composes a Lay to the Holy Virgin.

Such is the slender thread of the narrative, interspersed with mythological and didactic digressions, which connects the thirty lyrics of the poem. These are sung by the inhabitants of the abode of youth, reminding us of the choristers of a beautiful miniature :

Moult furent belles et doucettes
Et bel ouvroient leurs bouchettes
En chantant les deux demoiselles ;
Vermeilles orent les maisselles,
Et bel estoient coulourées.[1]

As a specimen of their song, the following virelai deserves to be quoted in full ; its simplicity of form, with its recurring rimes *abab*, *cdcd*, *abab*, and the music of its diminutives, is admirably suited to its delicacy of sentiment, and as a happy portrayal of the charm of youthful pride it merits a place in every French anthology :

On dist que j'ai bien manière
D'estre orgillousette ;
Bien affert a estre fiere
Jeune pucelette.

Hui main me levai
Droit a l'ajournée ;
En un jardinet entrai
Dessus la rousée.

Je cuidai estre première
Ou clos sus l'erbette,
Mes mon doux ami y ere,
Cueillant la fleurette.
On dist, etc.

Un chapelet li donnai
Fait de la vesprée ;
Il le prist, bon gré l'en sai,
Puis m'a appellée.

Voeillés oir ma proyère,
Très belle et doucette,
Un petit plus que n'affiere
Vous m'estes durette.
On dist, etc.[1]

The *Prison Amoureuse* is the name given by Froissart to a collection of letters, ballades and virelais which he exchanged with his patron Wenceslas, when the latter was a prisoner in the castle of Niedeck after his defeat at Bastweiler in 1371. By its form, therefore, the poem reminds us of the *Voir Dit* of Guillaume de Machaut, which was also a correspondence half in prose and half in verse. Just as Machaut is asked to correct his admirer's verse, so Wenceslas asks Froissart to read and examine his poetry, to efface or add where necessary, and to excuse his ignorance, for he is not sufficiently a master in composition to be called a "workman" in the art.

The poem begins with a discursive introduction on the service a vassal owes to his lord and the generosity with which such service should be rewarded. The poet quotes the example of John of Bohemia (Wenceslas's father), who was recompensed for his generosity by the manner in which his friends stood by him till the last at the battle of Cressy. The poet then sings the praises of Count Amé de Savoie and relates his reminiscences of the brilliant festivities at the court of the count on the occasion of the marriage of Lionel. A virelay which he heard there brings back his thoughts to the subject of love. He tells us how he was consoled after being separated from his lady

by a letter which was brought to him as he was walking in his garden. The letter was signed "Le tout vostre grant ami Rose" and was stamped with the seal of a rose. It begged him for advice in matters relating to the heart, for its author was love-stricken, but dared not avow his love to his lady from the fear of being dismissed her presence.

A correspondence follows on the art of love, with many allusions to mythological and historical themes. Froissart is in a playful, ironical mood. Wenceslas, he says, errs in not declaring his passion, for women by their nature are fond of power and are glad to receive a lover's prayers; but most, he says, though not all, when they see a man in love with them, however much they feel disposed to accept him, will show the opposite complexion. Elsewhere, in a delightfully ironical virelai, we hear why the lady sees no reason to have pity on her lover's melancholy:

Je ne suis onques si lie,
Ne de coer si envoisie,
Que quand je vois fort penser
Celi qui d'amer me prie,
Car toute melancholie
Li affiert bien a porter.

As aucuns grieve si fort
Que c'est droite amere mort,
Mais, vraiement,
Chils y prent joie et deport,
Tout deduit et tout confort,
Vechi comment.[1]

The poet's sense of humour evidently takes the upper hand. His gay, childish nature even breaks forth into sheer frolicsome fun. One day, whilst carrying in his purse the letters of his friend Rose, he is seized by his mistress and other maidens and made

to sit in the midst of them. The bulging purse arouses their curiosity, and with evil design they distract his attention :

> Et elles qui mettent grant cure
> A savoir de quoi elle est plaine,
> Si c'estoit de soie ou de laine,
> Ou d'un frion ou d'un aloe,
> Conseillent si bas que ne l'oe :
> " Entroes que nous l'ensounions
> Et que nous jouons et rions,
> Sachons qu'en l'aloyère il a ".[1]

But the poet hears their titter and whispering :

> . . . Aussi oi-je en basset dire :
> " Or ci, ci, ci, bien, je les garde,"

He discovers the theft and detects a suspicious bosom ; the vivacious maiden flees, pursued by the victim ; but the others seize him, pommel him and drag him, sparing neither his person nor his garments :

> La commençames un estour
> Sans mautalent et sans irour,
> Car la damoiselle aherdi
> Onques la vie n'en perdi ;
> Et elles aussi m'aherdirent,
> Qui onques voir ne me perdirent.
> La fui je boutés et saciés
> Et detirés et embraciés
> Par jambes, par corps et par bras,
> Sans noient espargnier mes draps.[2]

Finally, the poet is saved by his mistress, who fears the letters may be hers. The letters are produced, the poems they contain are cut off with a diamond ring, the first are restored, but the verse is forfeited.

It is in scenes such as this that the poet reveals his true genius, and they evidently deserve for him a better name than " decadent court poet ", as the poets

of the later Middle Ages are generally described. The above portrait of a romping, dishevelled lover reminds us of a Watteau rather than of a primitive master, and shows that Froissart has as little in common with the earlier poets as the gay and brilliant knight of the Hundred Years' War with the pious and austere crusader.

Of the remaining narrative poems reference has already been made to the *Débat du cheval et du Lévrier* and the *Dit du Florin*, in which the poet leaves the subject of love and entertains us with an account of his travelling adventures. The first of these, as we have seen (p. 23) is a delightful reminder of the wearisome nature of medieval travel, and throws an interesting sidelight on his journey to Scotland in 1363. The *Dit du Florin* was written at Avignon in 1389, when Froissart was passing through the town after his visit to the court of Gaston de Foix, and is supposed to have lost his purse with all the crowns given him by the count. The story is related with much verve and good humour, and is also of special interest, apart from its literary merit, for the light it throws on the poet's life and character. From Douai to Valenciennes, he declares, there is no man who can spend money more easily than he, and not only is he robbed at chess and dice: he also loses much by lending to his friends. Money will not stay with him; it prefers nobles, lovers, pilgrims and merchants. Yet he does not buy up corn nor does he build churches or clocks, or ships or houses. Money leaves him so soon and travels so quickly that it would be a good messenger if only it would return. During the last twenty-five years, he says, he has had two thousand francs, apart from his stipend as curate.

What has become of them? He questions one which he finds in the corner of his purse—Why hasn't he followed his mates?—It is because he is cut and defaced, and so, instead of passing through a thousand hands, has remained with his master and has travelled with him through many lands. As for his fellows, seven hundred have been spent on his master's books and have enabled him to write many histories which will preserve his memory; five hundred have been spent at the taverns of Les Estinnes, and twice that number on travelling in luxury from town to town.—But what of the eighty florins received from Gaston?—These he left, says the poet, one Sunday in his purse while he attended mass, and when he returned he found the purse was empty.—There is no need to grieve at the loss, says the florin; hasn't the poet many other friends who will stand him in good stead? Isn't there too the expectancy of the canonry of Lille, which has cost, it is true, a hundred florins, but has as yet brought little profit? Yet why bother, after all, for what will money be worth on the Judgment Day?

Like the *Débat du cheval et du lévrier*, the *Dit du Florin* with its lively humour and brisk dialogue (the charm of which is very largely lost in a brief summary), shows that Froissart excels as a raconteur in verse no less than in prose. Both poems have a place of importance in literary history. Medieval poetry was generally impersonal: just as the artist of the same period used conventional lines to depict the hair or the raiment of a figure or the leaves of a tree, without any reference to his own observation, so the poet used ready-made expressions or *clichés*, which were repeated for centuries with unfailing monotony. In

both of these poems, however, we have a purely personal inspiration, written in a graceful and natural language, entirely free from the irritating cliché. In all these respects the *Dit du Florin* is no less modern than its sixteenth century parallel, Marot's *Epître au Roi pour avoir été dérobé.*

We revert again to a more usual type of early poetry in the romance *Meliador*,[1] which for that reason one would scarcely imagine to be from the same pen as the two biographical poems, but in the fourteenth century, which was an age of transition, we have many contrasts equally striking. *Meliador* belongs to the Arthur cycle of romances, and it is the last representative of this type of poem, which had flourished in France and reached the height of its popularity two centuries earlier. It consists of a long suite of adventures in the usual Arthurian manner, filling some thirty thousand lines. For the modern reader gallantry and valour, as depicted by Froissart, are unable to sustain a work of this length, and it is therefore a striking testimony to the changes of taste to learn that this poem was so keenly appreciated at the court of Gaston de Foix, where it was read by Froissart every night after supper.

The plot of the story, which so interested the courtiers at Orthez, is laid for the greater part in Scotland. The following episode will give some idea of the work as a whole.

Meliador, the Knight of the Golden Sun, having set out from Chepstowe on the Severn for a tournament to be held at Tarbonne in Cornwall, was driven ashore by a storm on the Isle of Man. He had spent four days there, ignorant of his whereabouts, when some fishermen arrived who were fishing for herring.

Meliador enquired of them if he was near any town, and was told that the mainland was yonder, and that there he would find towns and castles; there too was the town of Aberdeen, where they, the fishermen, were to return the following day. Thereupon the fishermen promised for the price of a boat-load of fish to take the knight aboard their ship, and Meliador thus landed in due course at the ashen pier at Aberdeen. Here was a rich hostel, but he soon began to lament his evil fortune in finding himself so far from his destination, for he had hoped to win great fame at the tournament. He was consoled, however, by his squire, who had heard that not far from the town in the castle of Montsegur lived the beautiful Hermondine, daughter of King Hermond of Scotland, the princess who had sworn to marry the knight who, after five years' trial, should be generally considered to be the most valiant knight at the court of King Arthur. Meliador thereupon determined to visit this castle, and in order to gain admittance to the princess, who was closely guarded, decided to disguise himself as one of those goldsmiths who carry their rings, brooches and other ornaments from castle to castle, for he knew that these jewellers are always admitted to the presence of the ladies who take great delight in their wares. The squire sets out through the streets of Aberdeen, buying up from the goldsmiths large quantities of rings and brooches. Knight and squire then proceed to the palace, dressed in black like merchants, and with blackened hands, for white hands would have betrayed their noble extraction. At the palace the merchant shows his wares to Hermondine, and she purchases all his jewels and brooches for herself and her ladies, little suspecting that the

merchant was the Knight of the Golden Sun, who had risked his person in so many perils and adventures in order to prove himself worthy of her hand. But when the merchant had left, Hermondine discovered his identity, and longed to test the valour of the knight whose reputation had already reached her. She decided to ask her father to hold a tournament at Stirling. For a long time, she declared to her father, she had been kept like a bird in a cage; for two years she had seen no jousting of knights, and having no joy in life she was becoming heavy and dull. No father could refuse such an appeal; a tournament was proclaimed to be held at Stirling, where there was a large open space well suited for the jousting. The castle was prepared for the fête and a large pavilion was erected for Hermondine and her company of beautiful maidens. A hundred knights arrived to take part in the jousts, and amongst them Meliador, wearing his device of the Golden Sun.

There are, certainly, episodes in the poem which are not without charm, but in the main the work is most remarkable as a proof of the vast verbal resources of its author. Froissart will repeat the same themes and accumulate adventures throughout thousands of lines, regardless of their significance, for the sheer joy of riming. Often, having one idea, he will turn it in a dozen different shapes:

Car et d'esté et d'ivier
Au lever et au couchier,
Au dormir et au veillier,
Soit au boire ou au mangier,
A l'aler ou au joquier
Au seoir ou au drecier,
Ou au reposer cuidier
Qu'amours si me presente
Son plaisant corps et legier. . . .[1]

Elsewhere he will pile epithet upon epithet, covering the same attributes many times over :

> Jone, joians, jolie et amoureuse,
> Bonne, belle, bien faite et bien parlans,
> Sage, soués, courtoise et gracieuse,
> Lie, loyaus, legiere et avenans,
> Franche, friche, faitice et très plaisans,
> Dame d'onnour, de bien enluminée. . .[1]

This verbal invention, which knows no limits in such vast works as *Meliador* or the *Espinette amoureuse*, reveals itself in poems of restricted compass in an intricate structure of rhythm and rime, so that we find already in Froissart's poems traces of that fashion in poetry which was to culminate later in the School of the Great Rhetorikers, for whom poetry reduces itself to a play of rime, rhythm and words. Froissart, it is true, achieves no feats of virtuosity to be compared with those of the later poets, who could boast of poems capable of being read vertically and horizontally, in a score of different ways, but it is interesting to note that he tries his skill at the simpler type, the ballade équivoquée :

> Vrai desir qui m'enlu*mine*
> *Mine* mon coer trop par*font* ;
> *Font* dont ses rais un tel *signe*,
> *Si ne* se cessent. Il *m'ont*
> *Monté* en un dur parti ;
> Ensi l'ai je mal parti.[2]

The same tendency, moreover, is seen in the Lay, with its subtle interlacing of lines of three, four, five, six, seven and eight syllables. It is this form, for instance, that Froissart chooses to express his sorrow at the death of his patron, Queen Philippa. How much the theme loses in solemnity when subjected to this complicated rhythm can be seen by comparing

with the sober and impressive description of the same event in the *Chronicles* verses such as the following:

D'elle n'issi
Je le vi
Et servi
Tant en di
Par merci
Qu'onneur et francise.
Je certifi
Et affi
Qu'ennemi
Et ami
Ont a li
Perdu. Quant g'i vise
Je m'en soussi
Et grami
A par mi,
Et maudi
Sans detri
La mort qui l'a prise.[1]

These excessively ornate works are no less monotonous with their complexity of form than the longer poems with their banalities and repetitions. Fortunately, in many of the shorter pieces, Froissart avoids these excesses, and substance and form are admirably balanced. Although we may not care for the lover's protracted companionship throughout a work of five thousand lines, his confidences arrest us when confined to the three strophes of the ballade or the seven lines of the rondelet. We expect then no great depth of feeling. Many of these verses, we feel, were destined to be adorned with a blue ribbon (blue denoting fidelity in the language of the times) for despatch to a lady, who, however young in years, was experienced enough in manners to regard them as a token of homage rather than a declaration of passion. Their charm is to be compared to that of a delicate bouquet

preserved for us as a relic of medieval gallantry. At times the poet will reproach his lady for her coldness, telling her that his love reminds him of an island with inaccessible shores :

En un isle de mer ensus de gens,
Ou on ne peut entrer fors par fortune,
Sont mes amours, ce n'eſt mie grans sens.
En un isle de mer, ensus de gens.
Je waucre autour mès je ne puis dedens,
Pour arriver n'i voi voie nesune.
En un isle de mer ensus de gens.[1]

Or else, not daring to ask her for her pity, he will beseech her to deign to look at him as she passes :

Ira il dont, dame, tous jours ensi ?
Me lairés vous morir en languissant ?
J'ai tant souffers de mauls jusques a ci.
Ira il dont, dame, toujours ensi ?
Si je ne sui dignes d'avoir merci,
A tout le mains, regardés me en passant.
Ira il dont, dame, tous jours ensi ?[2]

Or with a gentle note of irony he will contraſt Love's promises with Love's rewards :

Amours, vous savez ma pensée,
Car tenu m'aves en dangier
Maint jour, maint mois et mainte année,
Mais onques ne me voc changier.
Or veuillés les maux alegier
Que je porte très dolereus,
Car ja dient li envieus
Que vous me faites des bontés,
Mais moult bien povés dire a ceuls
Que contraires eſt verités.[3]

Finally, he invents a thousand compliments ; of these, none, we imagine, would be more pleasing to his lady than the assurance that he who has lived in the hope of winning her pity finds comfort in the sweet remembrance Love has left with him :

A vous sui tout, dame gente,
Apareilliés d'obeir,
De coer, de foi et d'entente
A faire vostre plaisir ;
Loyalment vous ai servi
En espoir d'avoir merci.

Mais ce trop fort m'espoente
Que ne me daigniés oïr ;
Je voi bien que longe atente
Me menra jusqu'au morir.
Las ! j'ai vescu jusqu'a ci
En espoir d'avoir merci.

La riens qui plus me contente
En confortant mon desir
Et l'assaut que j'ai de rente,
C'est un très doux souvenir
Dont Amours m'a enrichi
En espoir d'avoir merci.[1]

But of all Froissart's poems those that have aged the least are the *Pastourelles*.[2] These, for the greater part, refer to some contemporary event ; one, for instance, celebrates the introduction of the houppeland, another the release of Duke Wenceslas after his imprisonment in the castle of Niedeck, and a third the arrival of French troops in Flanders to quell the insurrection of 1382. Froissart's natural humour is never more at ease than when he relates these rustic debates between Levrin Coupe-osière, Robin, Thieri li Veaus, Bustineaux, Crousteau, Perrette, Peronelle, Dame Noirette and Marion, who, with crook, basket and pipes are evidently amusing figures for the poet's courtly audience.

Of the twenty *Pastourelles* the most interesting for the English reader is that which relates the arrival of King John at Eltham in 1364. In an amusing dialogue the poet pretends that the peasants have never heard of the fleur de lis, and imagine that the

person with the lilies is a peasant like themselves; then, when the facts are explained to them, they change their attire, and with one beating the drum and another leading the dance, they go to welcome the king:

> Prince, je les vi la endroit,
> Ou cascune et cascuns chantoit,
> A l'usage de leur pays:
> Li très bien venus ores soit,
> Cils qui porte les fleurs de lys.[1]

There is a charm in this simple idyllic presentation of events which is seldom to be found in similar *pièces de circonstances*. How prosaic is Malherbe's oratory on like occasions, how insipid, amongst the more famous pastoral poetry of France, are the bergeries of Racan, when compared with these older works!

It will be seen that Froissart's verse, which has been overshadowed since the sixteenth century by his historical writings, deserves a foremost place amongst the literary works of the fourteenth century. The old-world beauty of the *Poésies*, their grace of form and delicacy of sentiment, have a special charm for the modern reader, and as the product of a pleasure-loving and artistic age, they are almost as essential as the *Chronicles* to our understanding of the later Middle Ages.

CONCLUSION

THERE is no more fitting conclusion to the above study than the remark with which Froissart prefaces his writings: "It is said of truth that all buildings are wrought of diverse stones". We must beware of simple formulæ. All things considered, the *Chronicles* are the greatest monument erected to the medieval institution of chivalry. With their strong appeal to some of our most potent instincts, to the love of adventure and the desire to "shine resplendent in halls and palaces", they will always be the favourite book of youth and generally of men who prefer action to meditation; few books indeed set a more effective standard of manly qualities, of courage, self-assurance and pride of bearing, of outspoken yet courtly speech. But the *Chronicles* contain much else besides the stories of the great deeds of knighthood, which have very largely made their reputation; we have only to read a little more closely and with a little less bias to regain touch with a much wider phase of fourteenth century life. Froissart was essentially human, even in his aristocratic leanings and epicurean tastes—and his reader has no difficulty in realising that evil, suffering and poverty were no less rife in the fourteenth century than in any other age. Kings, princes and prelates, we have seen, are often chastised in his pages; war, though considered inevitable, is often condemned. As Professor Ker has aptly pointed out, William Morris in his poems

from Froissart "has discovered more of the spirit of his history than the professed historians who complain of his levity and cheerfulness".

Froissart's inspiration is largely medieval. An atmosphere of Romance pervades his prose, allegory and abstractions abound in his verse, and his classical lore, though abundant, serves not as a source for a new type of beauty, but as illustrations and arguments for conventional themes. In other respects medieval standards no longer hold. His restless spirit of enquiry, his rational and often cynical interpretation of events, his love of pleasure, and his descriptions of his own temperament and feelings are all characteristic of more modern times.

Finally, not the least important part of the chronicler's achievement is his attainment of a perfect poise between the historian and artist. Although he never tires in the searching out of facts, he knows that facts are but his raw material, and in his "forge", as he calls it, he transforms them into dramatic scenes and interprets their human interest. The most striking feature of his last writings, in which he remodelled for the third time his early history, is the artist's attempt to give more life to his picture. An intense interest in his fellow-beings, a high ideal which knows no joy greater than that to be found in the work of its own creation, animate the words which open the Fourth and final Book: "Plus y suis, et plus y laboure, plus me plaist".

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] *Page* vii. Apart from the excellent but brief article by W. P. Ker in his Introduction to edition of Berner's *Froissart*, which is now out of print.

[1] *Page* viii. For a detailed description of this manuscript see S. Reinach: "Les Chroniques de Froissart à Breslau," in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1905, p. 378.

A. Lindner: *Der Breslauer Froissart*, Berlin, 1912.

[2] *Page* viii. See H. N. Humphreys: *Illuminated Illustrations of Froissart*, 1844, and Sir Henry Newbolt: *Froissart in Britain*, 1900. A series of reproductions has also been issued by the British Museum.

[1] *Page* ix. The chief continental editions of the Chronicles are as follows:

Les Chroniques de Sire Jean Froissart, ed. J. A. C. Buchon, 3 vols., Paris 1835.

Froissart: *Oeuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, Brussels, 28 vols. 1867-77.

Chroniques de Froissart, ed. Siméon Luce et G. Raynaud (Société de l'histoire de France), vols. I-XI, to 1385, Paris 1869-99.

English translations:

The Chronicles of Froissart, translated out of the French by Sir John Bourcier, Lord Berners, London 1523-5.

Reprinted, 2 vols. 1812; 4 vols. 1814-1816.

Edited with an introduction by W. P. Ker, 6 vols. 1903.

A further edition 8 vols., Blackwell, Oxford, 1927.

The only modern translation is that of T. Johnes, 5 vols., Hafod, 1803-10; reprinted, 2 vols., 1839, 1848, 1852, 1857, 1874 (Routledge).

For a general study of Froissart see:

M. Darmesteter: *Froissart*, Paris 1894; transl. E. F. Poynter, London 1895, in addition to that of W. P. Ker mentioned above.

[1] *Page* x. See P. L. Jacob: *Les Soirées de Walter Scott*.

[1] *Page* xi. Ronsard, ed. Vaganay, vol. IV, p. 7.

CHAPTER I

[1] *Page* 2. Froissart states that he was twenty-four years old when he arrived in England in 1361 (ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XVI, pp. 143, 235), but asserts elsewhere (*ibid.*, XII, 217) that he was fifty-seven years old in 1390. Of the two dates 1333, 1337, thus obtained for his birth the latter is the more probable; *cf*, A. Jeanroy: *Extraits des Chroniqueurs*, p. 165, n. 1.

[1] *Page* 4. See Jehan de Condé: *Dits et Contes*, Brussels, 1866.

[1] *Page* 6. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XIV, p. 197.

[2] *Page* 6. See Introduction of Kervyn de Lettenhove, I, p. 7.

[1] *Page* 7. See *Poésies*, ed. Scheler, I, 88.

[1] *Page* 8. *ibid*, I, 57.

[2] *Page* 8. See Kervyn de Lettenhove, Introduction, I, p. 16.

[1] *Page* 10. *Cléomadès*: a thirteenth century romance—the tale of a magic flying horse—by Adenet le Roi. A modernized and abridged version has recently been published by Jean Marchant, Paris (Emile Paul).

[2] *Page* 10. See *Poésies*, I, 159.

[1] *Page* 11. See *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1805.

[2] *Page* 11. See *Extraits des Chroniqueurs*, p. 167.

[3] *Page* 11. Christine de Pisan: *Oeuvres Poétiques* (Soc. des Anciens Textes), vol. II, pp. 79-81.

[1] *Page* 12. See *Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. XI, p. 253.

[1] *Page* 13. See Guillaume de Machaut: *Oeuvres* (Soc. des Anciens Textes), vol. III, Introduction, p. xxvii.

CHAPTER II

[1] *Page* 14. See Jehan le Bel: *Vrayes Chroniques*, ed. Polain, I, p. 154. "Encores sachez que quant ce noble roy Edwart premièrement reconquist Angleterre en sa jeunesse, on ne tenoit riens des Angles communément, et ne parloit on point de leur proesse ne de leur hardiesse, ne encor a l'autre chevauchie apres (i.e., Edward's second expedition against Scotland), laquele fut en Escoce; ne ilz ne sçavoient armer de plates, ne de bachines a barbière, ne de colerete, ne de menus fers fors que de grans haubers et de grands baligans armoyez de leurs armes, et de mites de toile costonnées, et par dessus ung grand chappel de fer ou de cuir bouilli."

[2] *Page* 14. For the legend of the conquest of Britain by Brutus see *Poésies*, ed. Scheler, vol. II, p. 382.

[3] *Page* 14. *Poésies*, I, p. 162. Already two centuries earlier England had the same reputation; Richard de Cluni writes in the twelfth century:

Anglia plena jocis, gens libera, nata jocari,
Tota jocosa, velim dicere tota jocus.

(Quoted by Pannier, Introduction to *Le Débat des Hérauts d'armes*, Soc. des Anciens Textes).

[1] *Page* 15. *Chroniques*, ed. Luce, I, 284-286.

[1] *Page* 16. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XIV, pp. 1-2.

[2] *Page* 16. "Car uns homs seus
Est trop merancolieus;
Compagnie li est preus."—*Poésies*, I, 284.

[3] *Page* 16. "Et s'une feste je seuïsse,
Lonch ou pries, fuſt tournois ou jouſte,
N'i ressongnoie frait ne couſte,
Ains m'i trouvoie des premiers."—*Poésies*, I, 229.

[1] *Page* 17. Cf. *Buisson de Jeunesse*, *Poésies*, vol. II, p. 8.

[1] *Page* 19. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, VIII, 226.

[1] *Page* 22. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, 346.

[2] *Page* 22. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, IV, p. 155.

[1] *Page* 23. See *Poésies*, vol. II, p. 12.

[1] *Page* 25. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, p. 247.

[2] *Page* 25. *ibid.*, vol. V, p. 278.

[1] *Page* 26. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XVI, p. 234.

[2] *Page* 26. *ibid.*, XV, 142.

[1] *Page* 27. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, VII, p. 64, and *Poésies*, I, 222.

[2] *Page* 27. "Whether alone or in company he will always faſt, as a lover should, yet he does not fail to lead a joyous life; Therefore I am never so glad or happy at heart as when I see wrapt in thought the man who seeks my love, for melancholy becomes him well."

[1] *Page* 28. See *Times Literary Supplement*, 1928, p. 684.

[2] *Page* 28. See *Poésies*, II, p. 226.

[1] *Page* 29. See *Poésies*, II, p. 285.

[2] *Page* 29. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, VII, p. 182.

CHAPTER III

[1] *Page* 32. "Farewell, beauty, joy and all delights, singing, dancing, and every pleasure; a hundred thousand times farewell! Farewell, Brussels, where the baths are pleasant, and the maidens pretty; farewell, beauty, joy, etc. . . . Fine dwellings, Rhine wine and soft couches, coneys, plovers, capons

and pheasants, fair company and courtly folk; farewell beauty, joy, etc." E. Deschamps, vol. IV, p. 6.

[2] *Page* 32. See *Ann. Soc. Arch.* Bruxelles, vol. XI, pp. 340-1.

[3] *Page* 32. See *Poésies*, II, p. 9.

[4] *Page* 32. See *Poésies*, I, 305.

[1] *Page* 33. See *Poésies*, II, 318.

[2] *Page* 33. See *Poésies*, II, p. 229.

[1] *Page* 34. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, p. 210.

[1] *Page* 35. See Jeanroy: *Extraits des Chroniqueurs*, p. 173.

[1] *Page* 36. "There it (*sc.* money) has all its pleasures; its good days and good nights; there it sleeps and rests; there it is rubbed, scrubbed and furbished, washed and prepared. They play with it like children, weigh it in the balance, put a barrier in front of it and provide for its comfort, so that none can grab it. Those who make cloth are given handfuls of it." *Poésies*, II, p. 221.

[2] *Page* 36. See Kervyn de Lettenhove, I, p. 241. Froissart's remark (ed. Luce, p. 341, MS. B6) that he was at the table of King Charles of France twenty-two years after the "Combat des Trente," i.e. in 1373, seems to have escaped the attention of earlier biographers. He was thus probably in Paris at the time of the Grand Council held in September of that year, when Du Guesclin gave his opinion on the tactics to be pursued against the English invaders. Is it possible that he was associated with the negotiations for paying the ransom of the Earl of Pembroke (whom he names in the *Poésies* amongst his patrons)? The Earl had been captured in 1372 by the Spaniards at La Rochelle, and the King of Castille had offered to hand him over to Du Guesclin in exchange for certain lands, and the Earl had arranged for his ransom to be paid to Du Guesclin through the intermediary of Lombards of Bruges. The agreement dates from the 11th January, 1374 (See Kervyn de Lettenhove, XVIII, pp. 511-43), but the negotiations were probably started earlier, and if Froissart took part in them it would explain why he forsook the Muses, as he says, during this period.

[3] *Page* 36. See p. 211.

[1] *Page* 37. *Poésies*, II, p. 10.

[1] *Page* 38. "For he who has children must run a big household, pay a nurse, hear the shouting and wailing of brats, must find clothes, boots, bread, wine, milk, and cheese, logs, coal, bread and meat, rooms and beds, with blankets and linen, cradles for rocking, and must put up with their dirt for the six or seven years that it lasts; he who has children needs no other scourge; he has nothing but trouble in store; fortunate are they who have neither son nor daughter." E. Deschamps, vol. VII, p. 141.

[2] *Page* 38. "Autant vaudront au jugement
Estront de chien que marq d'argent."
Poésies, II, p. 234.

[3] *Page* 38. "Never did I see you discomfited, but ever full of comfort and enterprise. It's a thing I greatly esteem. I have seen you so gay, so lively and amorous, that you live to my heart's liking." *Poésies*, II, 227.

[1] *Page* 39. "This money you have well spent, I value it more than any, for you have made with it many a history, for which you will be remembered in time to come." *Poésies*, II, p. 226.

[1] *Page* 40. Ed. Luce, II, 265.
[2] *Page* 40. See Kervyn de Lettenhove, I, p. 287.
[1] *Page* 41. E. Deschamps, vol. VII, p. 140.
[1] *Page* 42. *ibid*, vol. I, p. 96.
[2] *Page* 42. *Poésies*, II, p. 332.
[1] *Page* 43. *ibid.*, II, p. 335.
[2] *Page* 43. See below, p. 139.
[1] *Page* 44. E. Deschamps, *Œuvres*, vol. VI, p. 73.
[2] *Page* 44. Ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, p. 361.
[1] *Page* 45. *Chronicles*, Ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XII, p. 21.
[2] *Page* 45. "And the French talk for a long time and wait till the enemy comes to find them in their country, which oppresses my heart. Through much talking and no acting many a country has been destroyed in war; this is evident in the case of France and England." E. Deschamps, IV, p. 132.

CHAPTER IV

[1] *Page* 46. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, pp. 1-2
[1] *Page* 48. "When I see valleys and hills, and grapes in carts and on trellis, I say that the country is good, and I open my ears when I hear wine poured from bottles, for I take great pleasure in drinking." *Poésies*, II, 385.
[2] *Page* 48. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 23.
[1] *Page* 49. *ibid.*, p. 31.
[1] *Page* 51. *ibid.*, p. 85.
[1] *Page* 52. *ibid.*, p. 88.
[1] *Page* 56. *ibid.*, XIII, p. 40.
[1] *Page* 57. *ibid*, X, p. 352.
[1] *Page* 58. *ibid.*, XIV, p. 11.
[1] *Page* 59. *ibid.*, XI, 263-4.

CHAPTER V

[1] *Page* 60. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XV, p. 4.
[1] *Page* 61. Mary Darmesteter: *Froissart*, p. 165.
[2] *Page* 61. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XV, pp. 54-76.

[3] *Page* 62. *ibid.*, XIV, p. 384.

[1] *Page* 63. Froissart refers again to the difficulty caused by differences of language in a passage of the Rome version (ed. Luce, I, 306): The nature of the English is such that they are always afraid of being cheated and will question a thing in the strangest fashion; and what they have agreed upon one day they will repudiate the next; and they are all the more inclined to this as they do not rightly understand all the terms of the French language; and it is impossible to get a matter into their heads unless it is something to their profit."

[2] *Page* 63. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XV, pp. 108-23.

[3] *Page* 63. See Dinaux, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

[1] *Page* 65. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XIV, pp. 368-76.

[2] *Page* 65. *ibid.*, XV, p. 140.

[1] *Page* 66. *ibid.*, p. 143.

[1] *Page* 67. *ibid.*, XV, p. 157.

[1] *Page* 68. *ibid.*, p. 167.

[2] *Page* 68. *ibid.*, p. 179.

[1] *Page* 69. See Kervyn de Lettenhove, I, 463.

[2] *Page* 70. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XVI, p. 233.

CHAPTER VI

[1] *Page* 75. For the circumstances in which the discovery was made see Jehan le Bel: *Vrayes Chroniques* (Brussels 1832,) preface, by L. Polain.

[1] *Page* 76. See Jacques de Hemricourt: *Miroir des nobles de Hesbaye*. The author states that he was on terms of intimacy with the Canon: "Je le veys et hantay tant son hosteit que je en saray bin veriteit recordeir."

[1] *Page* 77. For Jehan le Bel's history of these campaigns see his *Chronicles*, ed. Polain, vol. I, chaps. VII-XIII.

[1] *Page* 78. Jehan le Bel, *Chronicles*, vol. I, p. 47.

[1] *Page* 79. *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 79.

[2] *Page* 79. See *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, p. 290.

[1] *Page* 80. "Car hystoire est si noble, ce m'est advis et de si gentile proesse, qu'elle est bien digne et mérite d'estre mise en escript pour le en memoire retenir au plus prez de la verité." *Vrayes Chroniques*, p. 2.

[1] *Page* 81. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, II, 265.

[2] *Page* 81. Jehan le Bel, *Vrayes Chroniques*, II, 89.

[1] *Page* 82. Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, III, 184-5.

[1] *Page* 83. Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, IX, 63.

[1] *Page* 85. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, 318.

[1] *Page* 86. Jehan le Bel, *op. cit.*, II, p. 29.
[2] *Page* 86. Froissart, ed. Luce, III, p. 293.
[1] *Page* 87. *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 236.

CHAPTER VII

[1] *Page* 88. Montaigne, *Essais*, ed. Trechmann, I, p. 408.
[1] *Page* 90. "Knowledge is that which can change the mortal into an immortal." (*Livre du Chemin de longue estude.*)
[1] *Page* 93. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, p.2.
[1] *Page* 94. *ibid.*, ed. Luce, I, p. 145.
[2] *Page* 94. *ibid.*, VI, p. 53.
[3] *Page* 94. Debidour, *Les Chroniqueurs*, p. 76.
[1] *Page* 95. For an example of these difficulties see a letter to the *Times Literary Supplement*, July, 1928, on the proper names contained in Froissart's account of Otterburn.
[1] *Page* 96. See Siméon Luce, vol. I, p. cxxiii.
[2] *Page* 96. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, 212.
[1] *Page* 97. *Chronicles*, ed. Buchon, II, 727.
[1] *Page* 99. *ibid.*, ed. Luce, III, p. 425.
[2] *Page* 99. Rigollot, *Mém. de la Soc. des Antiq. de Picardie*, vol. III, p. 135.
[1] *Page* 102. Jehan le Bel, *op. cit.*, II, p. 61.
[1] *Page* 103. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, III, p. 424.
[1] *Page* 104. "This will be my desire, if it pleases God and his saints, so long as I live, I will gladly speak of men of valour; if I know any good concerning them I will record it; if I know any evil I will say nothing of it. This ought we to do, and this will I do."
[1] *Page* 106. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XII, p. 153.
[1] *Page* 108. *ibid.*, ed. Luce, III, 295.
[1] *Page* 109. *Grandes Chroniques de St Denis*, vol. V, p. 462.
[2] *Page* 109. Buckle, *Miscell. Works*, vol. I, p. 234.

CHAPTER VIII

[1] *Page* 110. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XV, 179.
[1] *Page* 111. Chaucer: *Fortune*. For Chaucer's treatment of the same theme see H. R. Patch, *Modern Language Review*, XXII (1927), pp. 377-88.
[2] *Page* 111. "She raises a man aloft; it matters not to her how he goes; she then overthrows him and casts him down with a rude blow." *Poésies*, II, 285.
[3] *Page* 111. ed. Buchon, II, 534.
[1] *Page* 112. ed. Luce, IV, 266.

[2] *Page* 112. "One should take time as it comes; good or evil fortune cannot last for ever; one day goes and another comes; I console myself with the thought that every month we have a new moon—one must take time as it comes." *Poésies*, Rondeau XCIX.

[3] *Page* 112. *Poésies*, II. p. 394.

[4] *Page* 112. *ibid.*, Ballade, III.

[1] *Page* 113. ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 293.

[1] *Page* 115. ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 227.

[1] *Page* 116. ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 251.

[2] *Page* 116. ed. Luce, IV, 298.

[3] *Page* 116. "Argens fait avoir benefisces," *Poésies*, II, p. 222.

[4] *Page* 116. *Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI,p. 251.

[1] *Page* 117. *ibid.*, XVI, 128.

[1] *Page* 119. "I have often heard of the fountain of Jouvence and of invisible stones, but these are impossible things." *Poésies*, II, 24.

[1] *Page* 120. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XV, p. 53.

[2] *Page* 120. *ibid.*, XIII, p. 4.

[3] *Page* 120. *ibid.*, XV, 78.

[1] *Page* 121. ed. Luce, VII, p. 100.

[1] *Page* 122. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XIII, 241; see also X, 229, XIII, 102.

[2] *Page* 122. *ibid.*, XII, p. 191.

[1] *Page* 122. *ibid.*, XV, 257.

[1] *Page* 123. See above, p. 63.

[1] *Page* 124. See Kervyn de Lettenhove, I, p. 496.

[2] *Page* 124. See *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, p. 214, 249, 312, etc.

[1] *Page* 125. *Mémoires de Philippe de Commines*, ed. Mandrot I, p. 326; II, p. 2.

[1] *Page* 126. See Jeanroy: *Extraits des chroniqueurs*, p. 187.

[2] *Page* 126. ed. Buchon, II, 266.

CHAPTER IX

[1] *Page* 128. This chapter is largely a reproduction of the author's essay on the "Chivalry of France," in *Chivalry* (Kegan Paul, 1928).

[2] *Page* 128. See *Chivalry*, ch. I.

[3] *Page* 128. Léon Gautier: *La Chevalerie*, 1883.

[4] *Page* 128. W. P. Ker: *Epic and Romance*, p. 4.

[1] *Page* 130. Joinville: *Histoire de St Louis*, trans. Marzials (Everyman).

[1] *Page* 121. "Ah! Love, how cruel it is to have to take leave of the best woman who was ever loved or served! May God bring me back to her in His goodness, as truly as I do depart in grief. Alas! What words are these! Indeed, I do not depart; if my body is going to serve our Lord my heart remains entirely in her keeping." Conon de Béthune, *Chansons*.

[1] *Page* 132. *Raoul de Cambrai* (Soc. des anciens textes), l. 6497.

[2] *Page* 132. Léon Gautier, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[1] *Page* 133. Christine de Pisan, *Œuvres*, II, p. 96.

[2] *Page* 133. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, II, 340-7.

[1] *Page* 137. *Le voeu du Héron*, 1839.

[2] *Page* 137. Horace Walpole to the Countess of Upper Ossory (*Letters*, IX, p. 233): As your ladyship was scandalized with the verses, though I assure you I gave copies to two Countesses, who desired to have them, I will now transcribe a more serious tale, which I found the other night in Froissart, and which shows how true gallantry is degenerated. He is speaking of Edward III's first expedition to France (I wish I could write the Black letter). "They had with them young Bachelors, who had each of them one of their eyes closed with a piece of silk. It was said how they had made a vow among the ladies of their country that they would not see but with one eye till they had done some deeds of arms in France." Is it not plain, Madam, that we were greater heroes when we were in Love and hoodwinked, than now that we have no sentiment and have our eyes broad open?

[1] *Page* 137. See ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 86.

[1] *Page* 139. *Chronicles*, ed. Buchon, II, 668.

[1] *Page* 141. "Why do lords toil and spend their substance in distant expeditions, abandoning their children and families, wives, possessions and lands, if it is not to win glory?" *Poésies*, II, p. 12.

[1] *Page* 144. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, III, p. 117.

[1] *Page* 146. "Ceux qui gagnent ont tousjours l'honneur." ed. Mandrot, I, 390.

[1] *Page* 148. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, VI, p. 156.

[2] *Page* 148. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 166.

[1] *Page* 149. ed. Luce, III, 179.

[1] *Page* 152. ed. Luce, II, 19.

[1] *Page* 153. *ibid.*, IV, 300.

[1] *Page* 157. "A thousand curses upon the man who was first an archer, he was a coward, he was afraid to close with the enemy." *Girard de Vienne*.

[2] *Page* 157. "Mon avis est que la souveraine chose du monde pour les batailles sont les archiers." Commines, ed. Mandrot, vol. I, p, 31.

CHAPTER X

[1] *Page* 161. Quoted by Coulton: *Chaucer and his England*, pp. 247-8.
[2] *Page* 161. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, II, 263.
[1] *Page* 162. *ibid*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XII, p. 4.
[2] *Page* 162. *Poésies*, II, p. 332.
[1] *Page* 164. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, IV, p. 271.
[1] *Page* 165. *ibid.*, V, 71.
[1] *Page* 167. See Oman: *The Great Revolt of* 1381, p. 51.

CHAPTER XI

[1] *Page* 171. See Pierre Champion: *Histoire poétique du Quinzième siècle*, vol. I, p. 132.
[2] *Page* 171. W. P. Ker: *Berner's Froissart*, p. xxi.
[1] *Page* 172. *Chronicles*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, IX, 128; XIII, 8 etc.
[2] *Page* 172. As, for example, in the following eulogy of Charles the Bold, by Jehan Molinet (I, 73).

et n'estoit de trop mondAIN ne trop soLiTAIRE, mais humAIN et tout saLuTAIRE: non inclin a DormiTION, mais a soin et DevoTION; non a vaine MONDanITE, mais a saincte MONDicITE; non a LUBRE concupiscENCE mais a saLUBRE continENCE; non a Nocive éBRIETE mais a Nette soBRIETE; car le vin friand non modéré engendre delectation, delectation consentement, consentement péché, péché la mort . . .

[3] *Page* 172. "Et la porte fu reclose, si très grande plorrie, brairie et criie des fenmes et enfans et des amis de ces bonnes gens que grans hisdeurs estoit a l'oir et considerer." Luce, IV, p. 290.
[4] *Page* 172. "mener, porter, charier." Luce, III, 378.
[1] *Page* 173. See, for example, Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, p. 368: "Laissiez venir ces François; par Dieu il n'en retournera jamais couillon en France."
[2] *Page* 173. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, I, p. 324.
[1] *Page* 174. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, p. 169.
[2] *Page* 174. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, p. 339.
[3] *Page* 174. *Chronicles*, ed. Luce, X, 120.
[1] *Page* 175. *ibid.*, VII, p. 81.
[2] *Page* 175. *ibid.*, IX, p. 121.
[1] *Page* 176. *ibid.*, I, p. 364.
[2] *Page* 176. *ibid.*, ed. Luce, VI, p. 171.
[3] *Page* 176. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XII, 37.
[1] *Page* 177. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XVI, 232.
[1] *Page* 178. *ibid.*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 141.
[1] *Page* 178. See Gray to Dr Wharton (June 22, 1760):

"Froissard is a favourite book of mine (although I have not attentively read him but only dipped here and there), and it is strange to me that one who would give thousands for a dozen portraits (originals of that time) to furnish a gallery, should never cast an eye on so many moving pictures of the life, actions, manners and thoughts of their ancestors, done on the spot and in strong though simple colours. In the succeeding century Froissart I find was used with great satisfaction by everybody that could read; and on the same footing with King Arthur, Sir Tristram, and Archbishop Turpin: not because they thought him a fabulous writer, but because they took them all for true and authentic historians; to so little purpose was it in that age for a man to be at the pains of writing truth."

[1] *Page* 179. *Chronicles,* ed. Luce, IV, p. 91.
[2] *Page* 179. *Chronicles,* ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, p. 86.
[1] *Page* 180. *Chronicles,* ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, pp. 94-5.
[2] *Page* 180. *ibid.,* ed. Luce, III, p. 100.
[1] *Page* 181. Saint-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi,* IX.
[1] *Page* 183. *Chronicles,* ed. Luce, IX, 40.
[1] *Page* 184. *ibid.,* ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 17.
[2] *Page* 184. *ibid.,* vol. XIII, p. 149.
[1] *Page* 188. *Chronicles,* ed. Luce, I, 358.
[1] *Page* 189. *ibid.,* IV, pp. 239-43.
[1] *Page* 190. W. Scott, in *Edinburgh Review,* 1805, p. 347.
[2] *Page* 190. Jeanroy: *Extraits des Chroniqueurs,* pp. 184-5.
[3] *Page* 190. *Chronicles,* ed de Lettenhove, XI, 74.
[1] *Page* 191. *Chronicles,* ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, XI, 261.
[2] *Page* 191. *ibid.,* XI, 431.
[1] *Page* 192. *Chronicles,* ed. Luce, X, 233.
[2] *Page* 192. See *Chronicles,* Prologue to Book IV.

CHAPTER XII

[1] *Page* 193. Froissart's Poésies are contained in two MSS of the Bibl. Nat. (Fonds francais, 830, 831) for a description of which see P. Paris: *Les manuscrits de la Bibl. du Roi,* vol. VI, p. 374.

In one of these MSS Froissart states that he started to compose these poems in 1362 and finished them in 1394. A miniature represents the author reading his verse to a young man and two young ladies. It has been thought that one of these volumes was that presented to Richard II; inscriptions on the verse of the first folio show that the MS travelled to England and was once the property of the Earl of Warwick. Written on the same page are also the phrases: plus lede (laide) n'y a que Jaque de Bavière, plus bele n'y a que Warigny.

[1] *Page* 195. "Serve in silence, obey day and night, body, heart, thought, faith, intent and desire offer humbly to one's lady." See *Poésies*, I, p. 13, etc.

[2] *Page* 195. "Though I never have solace, yet it pleases me so well to live in hope, that I wish ever to remain thus, for a better state, I cannot choose."

[3] *Page* 195. "And when God's most holy hour comes, and my soul leaves my body, I wish it to be written in my tomb, that I sleep and rest with Lovers, not because I was loved, but because I loved with devotion." *Poésies*, I, 85.

[4] *Page* 195. "To bring one's heart to good ways and noble qualities Love is the true school." *Poésies*, I, 89.

[1] *Page* 196. "Love when he took me removed me from ignorance and coarseness; he acted not unwisely when he taught me to love in my youth." *Poésies*, II, 262.

[2] *Page* 196. "Without bit, saddle or bridle, I travel and ride through the world." *Poésies*, II, p. 31.

[3] *Page* 196. "I desire joy and peace at all times, gladness of heart; I wish to be merry, a good dancer and singer, to be beautiful, loving and wise; to speak discreetly and sensibly, and to have wealth and power." *Poésies*, II, 147.

[1] *Page* 197. "My mind cannot attain to it; its sole end is to be gay and pleasing, to love pleasure and delight, dancing, carolling, and amusement." *Poésies*, II, 51.

[2] *Page* 197. *Poésies*, II, 52.

[3] *Page* 197. "By a word of refusal, from the mouth and not from the heart, I have driven my friend from me, and I shall die of sorrow. Alas! How can my mouth say just the contrary of that which my heart desires. I wish to console my heart, my mouth matters not, it will never be dismayed by any word or cry." *Poésies*, II, 121.

[1] *Page* 198. "If I have given myself honourably, and have lost my heart to my dear friend, who loves me well, as I love him, I ought not to be blamed for that." *Poésies*, II, 75.

[2] *Page* 198. "For in sleeps, methinks, I take counsel from the God Morpheus, who dispels my cares and brings me laughter and joy and pleasure from my lady, from whom I have nought when awake; I have no joy but when I sleep." *Poésies*, II, 384.

[3] *Page* 198. "Some consult physicians to have counsel in their ills; some, when fasting or drinking, have fever, gout or itch, but will not partake of physic; I will not argue on that point as I know not who are the wiser, but I know indeed that it is good to refrain from cold, from fruit, from women and cheese." *Poésies*, II, 377.

[1] *Page* 199. "I used to spend my time and my youth in pleasure. Alas, Love now forces me to do otherwise, when she whom I adore, with all my heart, will not change or abate her obduracy a jot."

[1] *Page* 200. One must suffer in silence and gratefully receive all that Love ordains.

[1] *Page* 201. "The rose is held the most beautiful of flowers, and next, methinks, the violet; the lily is beautiful and the cornflower, the gladiolum is perfect and pleasing, the peony, lily of the valley, and marigold; every flower has its merit, but for my part, I say I love the daisy beyond all others."

[2] *Page* 201. See Skeat's *Chaucer*, vol. I, p. 462.

[1] *Page* 202. See *Englische Studien*, XXVI, pp. 321-36.

[1] *Page* 203. Henry d'Outreman, *Histoire de Valenciennes* (1639), p. 241.

[2] *Page* 203. L. Planchon: *L' Horloge, son histoire rétrospective* (1899).

[1] *Page* 204. "Read often Master John Froissart's book and treatise of the clock of love, in which the art of wise love is well treated." Quoted by Dinaux: *Trouvères et Jongleurs du Nord de la France.*

[1] *Page* 205. "I consider you an idiot to remain here so late; go to bed."

[2] *Page* 205. "Many children of tender years are anxious to pay love's toll; but if they knew the price they would never try."

[1] *Page* 206. "I wish it were always summer, fair and fine, and the air temperate, bright, calm, pleasing, and soft, and that one might see in gardens and meadows roses and lilies and many flowers."

[2] *Page* 206. "I wish to be blithe and happy, cheerful, pretty, gay and graceful an adept in pleasures, well versed in fair language, graceful and stylish in dancing."

[3] *Page* 206. "I desire joy, peace and rest, the pleasures of fields and woods, the coursing of greyhounds the fine flight of birds, and to see gardens, orchards and plantations, well arranged and neatly enclosed; I would that trees and fruits small and big were there in great numbers for the joy of goldfinch, blackbird and nightingale, and all loving and tender birds."

[1] *Page* 207. "And the two damsels were most beautiful and gentle and as they sang they opened wide their mouths; their cheeks were red and their complexions fair."

[1] *Page* 208. "They say that I am wont to be a trifle proud; a little pride methinks, becomes a young maiden.

This morning I rose just at daybreak; I entered a small garden, stepping on the dew.

I thought I was the first to tread the tender grass; but my friend was there before me gathering flowers.

They say that I am wont to be etc. . . .

I gave him a chaplet made the evening before; he took, it to my joy; then he said to me:

Deign to hear my prayer, most beautiful and fair; you are too harsh to me,—a little beyond measure.

They say that I am wont to be etc. . . ."

[1] *Page* 209. "I am never so glad nor so gay at heart as when I see wrapt in thought the man who seeks my love, for melancholy becomes him well.

Upon some it weighs so heavily that it is truly a bitter death; but he, indeed, finds joy and pleasure in it, delight and comfort, and that is why—

I am never so glad nor so gay at heart etc. . . ."

[1] *Page* 210. "And they, who are most curious to know its contents, whether silk or wool, greenfinch or lark, take counsel in tones which he does not hear: 'Whilst we torment him and play and laugh, let us see what he has in his purse.'"

[2] *Page* 210. "Then began a battle, with no wrath or anger, for the damsel who was captured lost not her life. Then they seized me and would not let me go, and I was pushed, dragged, held and pulled by my legs, my body and arms, without sparing my clothes."

[1] *Page* 213. Edited by A. Longnon (Soc. des Anciens Textes), 3 vols. A short appreciation, with a translation of a few of the lyrics, is given by Sir Henry Newbolt in his *Studies Green and Grey*, pp. 11-24.

[1] *Page* 215. *Poésies*, II, 253.

[1] *Page* 216. *ibid.*, II, p. 366.

[2] *Page* 216. *ibid.*, II, 380.

[1] *Page* 217. *ibid.*, p. 290.

[1] *Page* 218. "In an isle of the sea, away from the crowd, where none can enter except by chance, there is my love, alas! in an isle of the sea, away from the crowd.

I sail around but cannot enter; I see no way of approach, in an isle, etc. . . ." *Poésies*, II, 410.

[2] *Page* 218. "Will it always be thus, lady? Will you let me languish and die? I have already suffered so many ills. Will it always be thus, lady?

If I am not worthy of pity, at least, look at me as you pass. Will it always be thus, lady?"

[3] *Page* 218. "Love, you know my thoughts, for you have kept me a prisoner many a day and many a year, but never did I wish to change. Now deign to lessen my suffering, which weighs sore upon me; for the envious say that you are kind to

me, but you can well say to them that the opposite is true." *Poésies*, II, 383.

[1] *Page* 219. "I am yours entirely, gentle lady, ready to obey you and to do your pleasure with all my heart, faith and desire. I have served you loyally in the hope of having pity.

But it grieves me most that you deign not to hear me; I see indeed that long waiting will bring me to my dying hour. Alas! I have lived till now in the hope of having pity.

That which pleases me most and comforts my desire, is a sweet remembrance, with which Love has enriched me, in the hope of having pity." *Poésies*, II, 388.

[2] *Page* 219. See E. Hoepffner: *La Chronologie des Pastourelles de Froissart* (1913).

[1] *Page* 220. "Prince, I saw them there, where shepherd and shepherdess sang, after the fashion of their country." "Welcome to him who wears the Fleurs de Lys."

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